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THOUGHTS

UPON GOVERNMENT

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THOUGHTS

UPON GOVERNMENT

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BY

ARTHUR HELPS.

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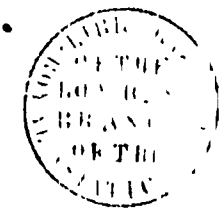

LONDON
BELL AND DALDY
YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN
1872

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DEDICATION.

DEAR LORD DERBY,

I dedicate this Work to you.

We have long been friends, and in former days we were sometimes associates in work.

I have, however, another motive, independently of friendship or of association in by-gone labours, for dedicating this Work to you.

I do so mainly because I do not know of any statesman of the present day who will be more inclined to appreciate whatever truth and force there may be, in that chapter of the Work which sets forth the large and frequent opportunities for judicious action, in political affairs, which belong to the Improver, in contrast to the Reformer.

I believe that you will thoroughly sympathize with my views on this subject; and that you will agree with me in thinking that, without ignoring the largest and deepest political questions, more of the social well-being of the people may be made to depend upon improvement, in

the matters which I have alluded to, than even in what are called great reforms.

If this Work should find some favour with men like yourself, but not otherwise, I propose to give a Second Series of 'Thoughts upon Government,' which I have already prepared in part, and which Series will deal with the action of Government in such matters as Emigration, Education, Recreation, Sanitary Improvement, War, and the Preparation for War.

Subsequently to this work going to press, it has been suggested to me, that possibly there may be some misconception in regard to what I have written about honours. It was written upon a general survey of the subject, extending over many years. I did not mean to contend, that honours had not often been most worthily conferred upon deserving men, in this and other countries; but that there were many grievous faults, both of omission and commission; and that the whole subject did not appear to me to have met with due consideration from modern governments.

I remain,

Very faithfully, yours,

ARTHUR HELPS.

LONDON: *November* 1871.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTORY REMARKS	1
II.	THE FITNESS OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT	8
III.	GOVERNMENT NOT LESS, BUT MORE WANTED AS CIVILIZATION ADVANCES.—PATERNAL GOVERNMENT	19
IV.	LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATION	35
V.	THE RELATION BETWEEN THE POLITICAL AND PERMANENT OFFICERS OF STATE. . .	48
VI.	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	51
VII.	ON ATTRACTING ABLE MEN TO THE SERVICE OF GOVERNMENT	61
VIII.	THE DISTRIBUTION OF HONOURS	83
IX.	COUNCILS, COMMISSIONS, BOARDS, AND OTHER SIMILAR AIDS TO GOVERNMENT . . .	96

CHAPTER		PAGE
X.	THE PRIVY COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN . .	109
XI.	ORGANIZATION	115
XII.	ON FORESIGHT IN GOVERNMENT . . .	125
XIII.	THE EDUCATION OF A STATESMAN . . .	133
XIV.	THE EDUCATION OF A STATESMAN (*cont.*) . .	142
XV.	ON IMPROVEMENT, IN CONTRAST WITH REFORM .	152
XVI.	THE WANT OF TIME FOR STATESMANSHIP .	161
XVII.	GOVERNMENT AND THE PRESS	171
XVIII.	ECONOMY IN GOVERNMENT	177
XIX.	DIPLOMACY	188
XX.	ON THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS . . .	198
XXI.	IN WHAT THE PROSPERITY OF A NATION CONSISTS	212
APPENDIX .	. . . . .	233
INDEX .	. . . . .	237

THOUGHTS

UPON

GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I THINK, that there are few studies, which would conduce more to human happiness, than a thorough consideration of Government—of its duties, its powers, its privileges, and especially of the limits which should be assigned to its interference. Much more is dependent upon government than at first sight appears. Its functions do not merely include peace and war, the maintenance of justice and the regulations of police; but they relate to material well-being of all kinds.

CHAP. I.

Functions of government.

CHAP. I.

And, what is perhaps of even greater importance, the advancement of Art, Science, and Literature depends, much more than is generally imagined, upon the functions of government being well-defined, well-directed, and judiciously exercised.

It is also to be observed, that that invaluable part of the education of grown-up people, which is evoked by political action, should be adequately maintained, and, if possible, continually extended. Everybody should be made to aid in government.

Aid to government the duty of all.

It is universally admitted that we live in an age of rapid transition. New modes of thought have arisen amongst us; new elements of political force have been developed; new branches of science are playing a very significant part in human affairs. Take political economy, for instance—a science so recent, that there are many persons who may almost remember its introduction; that is, its introduction into England, for the great Italian writers already had considered the principal subjects of political economy, which were, for the most part, new to us. We

Political economy.

owe much to political economy; but I do not hesitate to say, that there has been a certain presumptuousness attending its introduction —that presumptuousness which belongs to everything that is young—which requires to be noted, and made allowance for, when we endeavour to reconcile what may be well called the dictates of political economy, with the functions of civil government. CHAP. I.

I am now going to speak somewhat egotistically; but what I shall say is not meant to be egotistical, but merely explanatory, with the view of bringing myself and my readers into closer contact, and conducing to our harmony and understanding. I sincerely think I have some especial claims to be heard upon questions relating to government. I entered the public service immediately after leaving the university; I held, in succession, several offices, which ought to have given an observant man great opportunities of remarking the conduct of business in various Departments. When I ceased to be actively employed in the public service, I was frequently still obliged to entertain grave

Author's claims to be heard.

CHAP. I.

questions relating to government—being honoured, from time to time, by having such questions sent to me for consideration. I have since re-entered official life, and held an office which, from its nature, compels its holder to have some insight into the working of all the Offices under the Crown. I should be, therefore, a very inconclusive person, if I had not come to some definite ideas upon the general question of government.

I have, however, one strong reason for dwelling on these circumstances, which affects myself. It is, that if, in the course of this work, I should speak sometimes authoritatively, it is not to be attributed to any assumption of authority. It is often impossible to give all the reasons for a conclusion. One's experience does not always embody itself in the form of reasoning. A doctor cannot always tell you why he has come to certain conclusions about a patient's case. There are subtleties of observation which do not readily take a precise and logical form; but which, nevertheless, are well founded, and are often of extreme significance.

Experience not always embodied in the form of reason.

CHAP. I.

Then again, I have mentioned these circumstances, because, as I mean to be brief in the exposition of my views, I would ask my readers occasionally to give credit to my experience, and to believe that, in some cases, I have reasons which, for the sake of brevity, I do not put forward.

Readers to be taken into council.

Above all things, I am anxious to take my readers into council with me. I do not suppose that any man (certainly not this writer) can be absolutely right in the views that he brings forward. Nothing is more odious to me than dogmatism, in matters which admit of much discussion, and in which vast numbers of people are interested. I would even have my readers remember that I am an official man, and may have all the prejudices belonging to my calling.

Conclusions mostly apply to the British Government.

In this introductory chapter, I also think it right to mention that, though many of the conclusions which I come to are of a general nature, and would apply to the government of other nations, it is the Government of Great Britain, and her dependencies, which is mainly in my mind; and, only in respect of it should

CHAP. I.

I pretend to have the experience which would justify me in writing, in detail, upon this difficult subject.

Moreover, whatever I shall say about government is to be considered as independent of the form of government. I do not go the length of Pope's saying—

> For forms of Government let fools contest—
> Whate'er is best administer'd is best;

Opinion of George III. about the British Constitution.

for I rather partake of the opinion of George III. (not altogether an unprejudiced observer), that the British Constitution is the best that has yet been devised by man. But I admit that, both in ancient and modern times, there have been other forms of government, which have fulfilled much of what I think admirable in a governing power. I merely wish my readers to remember, that this work is written by one who has lived under a constitutional monarchy; has been satisfied with that form of government; and has it chiefly in mind when he is discussing governmental questions.

Having now, as I hope, put myself upon an

CHAP. I.

amicable footing with my readers, and especially begging them to consider, that I do not desire to impose upon them my views, but, on the contrary, would urge them to regard all that I say as suggestive rather than conclusive, I will, at once, commence the treatment of the subject.

Author's views suggestive rather than conclusive.

CHAPTER II.

THE FITNESS OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT.

British people easy to govern.

I DO not think that it is too boastful to say, that the British people, and our near relations in America and the colonies, are the most governable people on the face of the Earth. It may seem arrogant to enumerate our good qualities in this respect, but I think it must be admitted by other nations, that the British are not given to ferocity; that we are singularly averse to pushing any conclusion to its extreme; that we are very conservative; and that we abhor superlatives of any kind, in language, in conduct, and in controversy. I should hardly venture to say all these fine things of ourselves, if history did not amply confirm the statement.

Consider our two great revolutions; and it is in revolution, that the nature of a people is

most tried. How dignified, for the most part, was our conduct in these crises! They exhibit a certain magnanimity, of which every British reader must be proud. Whether he is still an ardent sympathizer with Cavalier or Roundhead; whether he is a devoted partizan of James II. or of William III.; he cannot but respect the other side, if he reads history in any spirit of fairness. Our great historical novelist, Sir Walter Scott, a man by no means free from the feelings of partizanship, nevertheless, being essentially a just man, always does ample justice to the other side; and the feelings of his readers go with him.

British moderate in their revolutions.

Nay, more: in rebellions, as well as in revolutions, the governable nature of the British people has not been less manifested. Anyone, who will carefully investigate the rebellions of Wat Tyler and Jack Cade, will, I believe, be constrained to come to a similar conclusion to that which has impressed itself on my mind, in reference to these rebellions. In short, we are the most cautious people in the world; if we are to be judged by the limits which we place to political action of all kinds.

And even in rebellions.

British caution.

CHAP. II.

The foregoing assertion might be illustrated in several ways. 'I prefer adopting one illustration, and endeavouring to work that out thoroughly; not presuming to say that it is the best, but it is the one that has always struck me the most.

Habit of deciding by majority.

It is the mode in which everything is ultimately settled in Great Britain by the majority. In the Apology which Plato gives us, as the speech of Socrates before his judges, there is this remarkable passage: 'Do not be vexed with me for telling you the truth. There lives not the man who can escape destruction if, as a born antagonist, he opposes you, or any other popular majority, and endeavours to prevent many unjust and unconstitutional things being done in the State; but it is necessary that he who will fight this battle for what is righteous, and yet, even for never so short a time, keep himself unharmed, must maintain the privacy of an individual, and take no part in public affairs.'

Plato's Apology

Now, in Great Britain there is no such fear for anyone. A man may be in a minority

of one; and amongst so independent, and so original a people as the British, there are many persons who rather like to find themselves in a minority of one. That one may be in some danger of ridicule, but not in any peril from persecution. Without, however, taking this extreme case, it may be observed how excellent is the conduct of both majority and minority when once the question in dispute has been put to the vote. It is not by any means taken for granted, by either majority or minority, that the question is finally settled. But it is settled for a time. Each party, as a general rule, behaves handsomely to the other. The majority is seldom offensively triumphant: the minority offensively recalcitrant. Sometimes, of course, when party-spirit runs very high as regards the matter at issue, there are a few noisy persons who make a demonstration. But the wiser men, on each side, gather up their strength for future contests; or if the matter is one which has been carefully canvassed and long debated, the beaten party makes up its mind to accept the new condition of things; and re-

Minorities not oppressed in Great Britain.

Conduct of majorities and minorities.

CHAP. II.

solves to see how it can best adapt itself to them, and work out its own ulterior views under them.

Goethe's opinion on minorities.

Goethe says, that all greatness and good sense are to be found in the minority.[1] An Englishman has no fanciful notion of this kind: he thinks that wisdom always rests with that side which he happens to take. Notwithstanding that, he neither despises minorities, nor worships majorities.

Majority often adopt opinion of minority.

The history of any great question in politics shows, that what may have been at one time the opinion of a minority, often succeeds in establishing itself ultimately as the opinion of the majority. Take the question of Free-trade, for instance. Experience seems to have proved, that the opinion in favour of Free-trade is a sound one—has, indeed, with us in England, proceeded from

Free-trade.

[1] „Alles Große und Geſcheite," ſagte er, „exiſtirt in der Minorität. Es hat Miniſter gegeben, die Volk und König gegen ſich hatten, und die ihre großen Plane einſam durchführten. Es iſt nie daran zu denken, daß die Vernunft populär werde. Leidenſchaften und Gefühle mögen populär werden, aber die Vernunft wird immer nur im Beſitz einzelner Vorzüglicher ſein."—Geſpräche mit Goethe, von Johann Peter Eckermann. 12 Februar 1829.

an opinion to a conclusion. But this opinion has gone through a series of stages of development. It was at first held by two or three thoughtful writers, who, perhaps, were the only persons in the kingdom who thoroughly believed in it, and were willing to accept all its consequences. The opinion very gradually grew into favour, until it came to be held by an overwhelming majority. It is clear that Goethe's maxim would only have applied to this question during a certain period; and, therefore, that the maxim is entirely conditional.

Development of opinions.

The British, I maintain, are very little influenced, one way or the other, by the number of persons happening to hold any particular political opinion. But we believe, that questions must be settled somehow; and that a most reasonable way of settling them is, to get them put to the vote, and to accept the decision of the majority. We respect that decision; not, perhaps, intellectually, but physically; if I may so express it. And that there should be such a respect for the decision of the majority, is an im-

Willingness to adopt decisions.

CHAP. II.

mense advantage to the cause of order, in any State.

That almost blasphemous saying, 'The voice of the people is the voice of God,' is not one which would find favour with our fellow-countrymen. But, for all that, the voice of the people, when it is made intelligible, is greatly respected by us, and is looked at—not in a religious, but in a business-like kind of way—as a thing which must be observed, and proved; and, in some measure, attended to.

Voice of the people to be respected.

The greatest aids to good government are those general principles of thought and action which belong to the character of the people; and which always can be appealed to, and relied upon, even in times of danger and of difficulty.

Aids to good government.

I do not believe that I have given too favourable a representation of our political modes of procedure; and, if my description is a just one, other nations must admit that they cannot appeal to their histories for examples of a similar nature. With us, the beaten party does not hasten to 'descend

into the streets;' does not suppose, for a moment, that a matter which has been decided by argument, or even by a nice adjustment of moral and political forces, is to be varied or recalled by brute force.

I should not so much insist upon our political history, to prove how well majorities and minorities conduct themselves, if I could not confirm my assertions, in this respect, by our conduct in simpler matters than those of politics. The same obedience to a majority, and respect for the right of a minority, may be seen in the decision of matters which are not political; and even in our recreations. A dispute arises; the question is put to the vote; and it is wonderful, and I may say delightful, to observe what thorough acquiescence, or at least obedience, is obtained, when once the question has been thus decided.

General obedience to the majority.

This may seem inconsistent with what has been said before, touching the conduct of the British in times of revolution, for, at any rate, during those periods they have not been content to abide by any mere vote, but

CHAP. II.

have had recourse to arms. All that can be said in reply is, that there are certain national questions which cannot be decided by the head or the tongue, but which must be left to the arbitrament of physical force. When, however, that dire state of things has arisen, the conduct of the British nation has been, as stated before, as little repugnant to justice and humanity as could possibly be expected.

Force necessary at times.

One other important circumstance, which renders the British more amenable to government than almost any other people, is, that they are singularly devoid of envy. Considering the immense display of wealth in Great Britain, there is very little disposition manifested, on the part of those who are entirely without wealth, meanly to envy the possessors of it. There is, notwithstanding some appearances to the contrary, less real evidence of the prospect of a revolution, for social purposes, in Great Britain than elsewhere.

British not addicted to envy.

Another point, worthy of observation, as regards our fitness for good government, is, that we are a very constant people—very

Constant in their attachments.

CHAP. II.

constant in our attachment to our political friends and favourites. We are hasty in censure: we pounce down very sharply upon any real or supposed errors of our political leaders; but, there is scarcely any mistake that they may make, anything that they can do, short of committing an act of deliberate baseness, which is not invariably condoned by the good nature of the public, which those leaders guide and govern. We are not the people to expect perfection in anybody; and our grave and humourous, and somewhat unprecise nature, makes us very tolerant of short-comings.

And though sharply critical,

tolerant in the main.

Lastly, and this is an element of fitness for being well governed, which is of a surprising and peculiar value, we have a horror of pressing any doctrine to its extreme. We abjure pure science in common life and in politics, and are never fascinated by the desire for completeness. Our proceedings, political and otherwise, are anything but neat, with the neatness of a *doctrinaire*, but are often very ragged at the edges; and we really like this raggedness. Hence, we are a people

Averse to extremes.

Compromises.

CHAP. II.

delighting in compromises, and much skilled in framing these apparently incomplete and unscientific arrangements, which, however, often embody the soundest practical wisdom.

Fitness for good government.

I think I have given several valid reasons for my belief in the fitness of the British people for good government;[1] which reasons, if true, are a great encouragement to statesmen to work with ardour, and without trepidation, for a people eminently constant, unenvious, practical, thoughtful, and averse to extremes.

[1] M. Guizot confirms the views expressed in the text and his testimony, being that of a foreigner, is mo valuable: 'En Angleterre aussi, chaque système, chaqu principe a eu son temps de force et de succès; jama aussi complètement, aussi exclusivement que sur le co tinent: le vainqueur a toujours été contraint de tolér la présence de ses rivaux, et de leur faire à chacun part.'—Guizot, *Civilisation en Europe.*

CHAPTER III.

GOVERNMENT NOT LESS, BUT MORE WANTED AS CIVILIZATION ADVANCES. PATERNAL GOVERNMENT.

A wrong opinion.

IT is an opinion of some people, but, as I contend, a wrong and delusive opinion, that, as civilization advances, there will be less and less need for government. I maintain that, on the contrary, there will be more and more need. It is a melancholy fact, but it is a fact, that civilization is mostly attended by complication. And, moreover, it is attended by a diminution of power, as regards individual effort. I always like to strengthen an abstract statement by some concrete illustration. Now, take lighting for instance. There was but little occasion for government regulations when the lighting of each particular house in great cities, entirely depended upon the owner of that house. But now, when the lighting, not only of public

Individual effort less powerful now.

CHAP. III.

streets, but of private dwellings, is chiefly effected by four or five great centres of lighting in a town, the whole of this function has entered into the domain of government, for no one private person has power enough to regulate the matter for himself, or can in any way insure that the quality of his light shall be what he desires. A similar course of argument applies to several of the primary requisites for the well-being and comfort of human life. Water supply, drainage, sewerage, means of locomotion, all enter the same category. I maintain, that the wisest and the richest man amongst us, the man too who shall have the most leisure, is perfectly incompetent, especially if he lives in a great town, to provide for himself some of these primary requisites of life. Having once thrown in his fate and his fortunes among an agglomerated mass of people, it is to the government alone that he can look for protection.

Subjects requiring government interference.

One of the results of advancing civilization has been an agglomeration of individuals in particular spots, peculiarly suited

Massing of the population.

for commerce or for manufactures. That agglomeration always takes power out of the hands of the individual. It makes a thing too big for him to deal with. The government is the only body that can control the fierce conflict of contending individual interests.

Division of labour.

One of the principal consequences of civilization is the division of labour; and that division, though no doubt a great benefit to the commonwealth, deprives each labourer of power over those departments of labour in which he is not concerned as a labourer. His interest, therefore, in those other departments, properly and legitimately goes to the State. And practically he will find, that his only influence over them will be through the influence he can exercise upon the government.

Diminution of personal power.

It is not only in these material things that the same law applies. The individual will find, that in the greater matters of government, advancing civilization has uniformly deprived him of some personal power and influence; and that he has, it may be unconsciously,

CHAP. III.

surrendered some of those functions, which would have been his under a simpler form of life and manners, to this absorbing creature called government. If he wishes Art or Science to advance, not being an artist or a scientific man, he will find that the only mode, or, at least, the chief mode of action that he can adopt, is through government.

Advancement of Art and Science.

Again; advancing civilization has not rendered it easier for the individual to deal with the foreign or colonial matters which concern him. Throughout the world, its progress has only tended to complicate these matters, and rendered it more necessary that those bodies, called governments, should give ever-increasing attention to those interests which they alone can deal with.

Foreign and colonial affairs.

Moreover, the holding of property has not become more simple in its nature as civilization has advanced, and has not given government less to do, but more to do, in order to protect the various interests to which it should give fair play. Property, as great jurists declare, is but a creature of the State: it must not be allowed to become

Tenure of property more complicated.

a noxious creature to the general community. I am persuaded, that any man, who will give a large circumspection to this branch of the subject, will be ready to admit that advancing civilization has provided, and will continue to provide, more work to be done by the government of each nation.

Paternal government.

I am well aware that the foregoing remarks may be held to indicate the advantage of a form of government, which is not approved of by many persons, who, moreover, think we have outgrown it; but which, on the contrary, I hold to be one that we must advance into, rather than recede from. This form of government is called 'paternal government.'

Has an ill name.

I freely admit that this phrase has an evil sound with many people, even of those who have given much thought to the general subject of government. They will persist in connecting the idea of unreasonable interference, with that of a paternal government. It is rather hard upon us fathers of families, that this view should be taken, but I do admit that we are sometimes apt to forget our children have come to, what are called 'years

CHAP. III.

of discretion;' and are wont to impose upon them, somewhat unreasonably, our own opinions, our own objects, our own desires. This, of course, results from our great affection for them, and our anxiety to enrich them with our own experience, forgetting that experience is a thing which cannot be bought with other people's money, but must be paid for in the coin of individual suffering.

Now the State is in no great danger of going wrong from an excess of affection, on the part of those who govern, for those who are governed; and, instead of repudiating a paternal government, I believe it would be our best policy to claim it with all the force we have.

Paternal government good policy.

We are now brought face to face with the nice and difficult question, of what is justly 'paternal' action in government, and what is unreasonable interference. I admit that the moment this paternal government does anything for any individual which he can do as well for himself, it is needlessly interfering, and tends to dwarf his powers of action, and of self-improvement. But if, on the other hand,

True limits of paternal government.

it neglects to do that which cannot be done by its children, as individuals, it inevitably cripples the well-being and improvement of the individual, and so far tends to render him a stunted creature.

Aristophanes: his peaceful citizen.

It was a very droll idea of that great wit, Aristophanes, to represent, in one of his plays, a good peaceful citizen who, in time of war, wished to make a separate peace with the enemy. This excellent person had no desire for conquest, and could not see why he should not come to terms with the enemy, on his own account. We smile at this comical attempt, on the part of an insignificant individual, at reconciliation with a huge adverse Power. Perhaps, however, we do not see, that an attempt similar to that which this good citizen was intent to make, for self-preservation from the horrors and injuries of war, would have to be made by each of us who should endeavour, without the aid of a paternal government, to relieve himself and his family from the horrors and injuries of bad drainage, foul air, or adulterated food. It does not enter into the power of any individual to deal, as an individual,

CHAP. III.

with those potent associations called gas companies, or water companies, or even with individual tradesmen, who, being in a state of prosperous warfare with the community, cannot afford to enter into special terms of peace with a private individual.

Need of government interferenee illustrated.

I knew a person who, in the innocence and confidence of youth, somewhat presumptously, took upon himself the endeavour to abate a great public nuisance; namely, an open ditch which had, originally, been nothing more than a well-meaning outlet for draining some fields, but which, in the progress of building, had become a sewer of intense malignity. This enterprising young reformer soon found that nothing less than the power of the State could abate this nuisance. One person was willing, but not able to do any good in the matter, another was able, but not willing; a third had only a life, or leasehold interest, and had, therefore, no hearty care for improvement. Occasionally, the property, through which this foul sewer ran, belonged to some corporation which was a most difficult body to move. In some instances the owner of the property was

not to be discovered, or when discovered was found to be incompetent to manage his own affairs. In other cases the ownership was the subject of legal controversy. Altogether, it was soon manifest that nothing could be done in the matter without State interference.

Now here is an instance in which advancing civilization, carrying with it a rapid increase of population in particular localities, caused an evil, for which the remedy was only to be found in a just and necessary interference on the part of government, which interference was not less needed because it may be called 'paternal.'

Interference just and necessary.

There have been many short and trenchant maxims, the currency of which has been very mischievous to mankind. I doubt whether any one of these maxims has been so mischievous as the saying *Caveat emptor.* If it does mean, as generally applied, 'Let the community have nothing to do with the wares which the purchaser wishes to buy,' it is a most cruel maxim. And if it only means, 'Let the buyer beware,' it is almost equally cruel, for his wariness will only make him un-

Caveat emptor a very mischievous saying.

CHAP. III.

comfortable, seeing that it cannot assist him in getting the goods that he wants for the money that he is prepared to give. To do this he must call in the aid of the community, as expressed and directed by government; and he is, in my judgment, a very foolish person if he hesitates to do so from the fear of putting himself in the hands of a paternal government.

Groundless fear of a *Bureaucracy.*

There are many people who are frightened by the word *Bureaucracy.* They think, perhaps, that there are a number of official men anxious to get into their hands the direction and management of the business of the world. But these frightened persons do not make sufficient allowance for that indolence of nature, which besets official men as well as the rest of mankind. In this country, however it may be in other countries, there is not any restless body of official men desirous of bringing great accretions of work upon their respective Offices.

No danger of it in England.

In considering this most important subject of governmental interference, it is always to be recollected, that the common sense of the

CHAP. III.

community will be for ever employed in restraining this interference within due limits. There will also be two great causes which will tend to make these limits within, rather than beyond what is requisite. In the first place; there will be the individual interest, often most powerful in Parliament, which is injured or menaced by any interference with its action on behalf of the public good. In the second place, there is the immense desire in every human breast to be allowed to act as freely as possible; which desire often militates against, and absolutely conquers the most manifest considerations of self-interest and welfare. People do not like to be controlled, or to lose any freedom of action, even for what they know to be for their good. Amongst a free people, the danger always is of too little governmental interference, rather than of too much.

Forces ever ready to limit it.

Danger from too little interference.

Then there comes in that powerful agent, ridicule, which will always be a secure friend on the side of those who are fearful of too much governmental interference. Ridicule will not allow governmental interference in small

Ridicule, a potent safeguard.

CHAP. III.

matters, even though it might be justified by very good reasons derived from general principles.

I will give an instance of what I mean. The adulteration of drugs is a very serious evil. It has before now proceeded to such an extent, that if prescriptions had been made up from unadulterated drugs they would have been perniciously strong; whereas, on the other hand, if the drugs were adulterated more than usual, the prescription became ineffectually weak. Now most people would admit that this was a very serious evil, and one which demanded legislation, and subsequent supervision, on the part of government. The word 'paternal' is always dropped in such cases, though, in reality, the action in question is that of a paternal government, which, in hearty concert with the public, has thrown the maxim *Caveat emptor* to the winds. Here is an admitted case for governmental interference, as also the sale of known poisons.

Adulteration of drugs.

Sale of poisons.

Now take another instance wherein, upon general principles, government might perha

be called upon to interfere; but, respecting which, no person of common sense would probably desire its interference. There are certain dyes which, when introduced into textures that are to come next to the skin, are decidedly injurious to health. But no one would wish government to interfere in this matter, for, in the first place, *De minimis non curat lex* might fairly be applied. And then, which is much more to the point, the buyer has it in his power, not only to beware, but to act according to his wariness, and not to purchase these dyed goods. He is in a far different position from the man who can only get water from a certain water company, and who cannot, however wary he may be, insure, without government aid, pure water for himself, and for his family.

Certain cases unfit for interference.

Pursuing this illustration still further, for it may be made a very fruitful one, I would say that a government need not interfere on *behalf of the purchaser*. And so far my readers, I think, will go with me. But the question becomes a very different one, if it is found that, in the preparation and application of

Non-interference on behalf of the purchaser.

CHAP. III.

some dye, great injury is done to the work-people, and especially to the children who are employed in making and applying certain highly noxious substances. Here paternal government has, according to my view of it, a right to step in, and to say to the wearers of certain ornamental appendages: 'You may wear these noxious and absurd things if you like; but you shall not make use of our children to manufacture them.' One of the first duties of a State is to have a regard to the health of its people, and especially of those who are least able to protect themselves, namely, its young children; and it may decidedly decline to allow them to have any dealings with that detestable substance known as 'Scheele's Green.' If this interference is admitted, it certainly may be classified under the head of paternal interference.

Interference on behalf of work-people.

Paternal government prevents revolution.

Paternal government prevents revolution. What socialists are always aiming at is a paternal government under which they are to be the spoilt children. But a government which should give considerable attention to the wants, and even to the pleasures, of the

governed, would satisfy the reasonable part of the population, and make them very averse to revolution. When government limits itself, as regards the executive, to the maintenance of order, and to the administration of justice, it is not likely to have a very strong hold on the affections of the people. There are persons who theoretically declare that they desire the least possible of governmental interference in all their affairs; but when any calamity occurs, or when any great evil, socially speaking, comes to the surface and is much talked about, these same persons will be found joining in the cry that government ought to have foreseen this—ought to look to that; and in short, all of a sudden (often when it is too late), they are willing greatly to extend their views with regard to the proper functions of government.

Interference demanded when any great calamity occurs.

I mean the conclusion, from all that I have said in this chapter, to be, that paternal government, as it is called, should be welcomed rather than abjured; and that we may be certain, in a free country, that limits will be put to its action, falling short of rather

Paternal government to be welcomed.

CHAP. III.

than exceeding those which are required for the welfare of the people governed.

Those who are afraid lest we should have too much paternal government, should remember that, in default of *paternal* government, we may have *fraternal* government; a form of rule which has always partaken largely of the relations which subsisted between those two brothers, of whom we have the earliest record.

Fraternal government.

CHAPTER IV.

LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATION.

I SUPPOSE it will be admitted by every-one, who has considered the subject of government, that these two functions—legislation and administration—are totally different in character. And, moreover, it must be observed that the same body which will perform one of these important functions well, is seldom or never so constituted as to fulfil the other equally well.

Difference between legislation and administration.

Then there arises the difficult question, of how far a legislative body should interfere with the administrative body, to insure that the legislation it has enacted should be thoroughly carried out. I submit that this interference should be the least possible. It is to be carefully remembered, that there are various sources of temptation attaching to a legislative

Limits of interference.

CHAP. IV.

body, prompting them to interfere unreasonably with administration. There is, first, the natural suspicion pervading the whole body, that if its legislation does not answer, it is because its yoke-fellow—the administrative body—has not acted in full accordance with the letter, or the spirit, of the enactments in question. Then there is the vanity, or the diseased activity, or the desire for prominence, which induces members of the legislature to busy themselves needlessly in interference with the executive. The action caused by these motives should be steadily resisted, otherwise great mischief may ensue, and indeed does take place at the present time. Needless returns are called for, occupying the time and attention of public Offices which ought to be otherwise employed; needless questions are asked in Parliament which sadly waste the time of the Ministers who have to answer them; and, what is a far more serious evil, the public Offices are hampered, worried, and weakened by a sense of their double responsibility: to their chiefs and their country on the one hand, and to Parliament on the other.

Parliaments sometimes impede good government.

Evils of much questioning in Parliament.

Now a marked evil of the present Age, as of all Ages in which criticism has risen to a great height, is, that everyone has to think, not only what he shall do, but how his deed shall *appear* to be done—how, in short, it will stand the test of a never-sleeping criticism. Effect of excessive criticism.

At first sight this may seem to be a good thing, but in reality it is not so. In the first place there is not time enough in the world for it. 'Wretched would be the pair above all names of wetchedness,' as Dr. Johnson well says, 'who should be doomed to adjust by reason every morning all the minute detail of a domestic day.' And something of the same kind applies to all forms of social life. There is not time, and certainly there is not energy enough, for those persons who have to decide, to direct, and to govern, also to have to explain their reasons and motives for all that they do. We see this in the case of great commanders; and a similar rule holds good almost universally. Ask the men who have been most successful in what are called private affairs—the captains of industry—whether they would have been equally suc- Saying of Dr. Johnson.

CHAP. IV.

cessful had they been obliged to work under the harrow of perpetual supervision and criticism. One of the delusions of the world has been the notion that there is any wonderful dissimilarity in the conduct of public and of private affairs, whereas, the general laws, which should regulate all human transactions, are the same in both cases. One of the most important of these laws is, that you should give a large amount of trust and confidence to your agents, if you wish that they should act for you with any of the vigour, promptitude, and comparative fearlessness with which you would act for yourself.

Trust necessary to vigorous action.

Necessity for a second legislative Chamber.

It is inevitably requisite, when treating the subject of this chapter, to consider the necessity for a second Chamber of legislature. It is a question, which deeply agitates the minds of men in the present day, and it cannot be held to be other than one of vital importance. In order, however, to consider it carefully, some general remarks may well be introduced.

Time and occasion are the two important circumstances in human life, as regards which

the most mistaken estimates are made. And the error is universal. It besets even the most studious and philosophic men. This may notably be seen in the present day, when many most distinguished men have laid down projects for literature and philosophy, to be accomplished by them, in their own lifetime, which would require several men, and many lifetimes to complete; and, generally speaking, if any person, who has passed the meridian of life, looks back upon his career, he will probably own, that his greatest errors have arisen from his not having made sufficient allowance for the length of time, which his various schemes required for their fulfilment. Now, is this an error which is less likely to occur in a popular assembly, than with individual men?

Common errors regarding time

The same statements hold good as regards occasion. Of that, too, a popular assembly is by no means more likely, than an individual, to form a just estimate. On the contrary, the danger which always threatens, and often prevents calmness of thought, and justness of action, when these have to be

and occasion.

CHAP. IV.

exercised in the presence of a numerous body, is likely to be very prominent and very fatal in matters which involve a just estimate both of time and occasion.

These general reflections cannot be held to be out of place, when we are considering the subject of legislation and administration. Men do not cease to have the common faults of mankind because they are elected to serve in a popular assembly. And this is true wherever man is placed—he having, always, great difficulty, as Goethe has remarked, 'in jumping off from his own shadow.'

Defects likely to prevail in a single Chamber.

Now, let us apply the foregoing remarks to the legislation that is likely to occur when there is only one, and that one an elected legislative assembly. Such a body will naturally partake of whatever impulses are predominant with the people. The immediate questions of the day will naturally pre-occupy the minds of its members; and those questions will assume a disproportionate value in their eyes. They will be eager to attempt what they have not time to accomplish, and will be

prone to exaggerate the urgency of the occasion.

Occasion is not opportunity.

Occasion is not opportunity.

Let us apply this maxim to the great subject of peace and war. There may frequently be a *Casus belli* which affords anything but a good opportunity of going to war. In dealing with such a case, the tendency of a popular assembly, or, indeed, of any single assembly, is, to give too much weight to the occasion. And therein appears the great advantage of having a second legislative assembly. It would be a very coarse way of putting it to say, that it enables us to make an appeal from 'Philip drunk to Philip sober.' But certainly there is something in this common phrase which is justified by the universal experience of mankind. The man who has not found out, that in serious matters it is well to address himself to the consideration of them, in various moods of mind, is either very inexperienced, or very unobservant.

There is not anything which, if a prudent man had to choose the Country in which he

CHAP. IV.

would reside and cast his fortunes, would more justly influence his choice than the fact whether a country possessed, or not, a second Chamber. Men can accommodate themselves to nearly any set of circumstances, and continue to carry on life tolerably, except under sudden changes of legislation which affect their dearest interests. It is taking an extreme case, but not an unfruitful one for observation, to notice what was done by the Commune in the late disturbances in France. In two or three weeks they passed laws affecting religion, property, freedom of speech, and freedom of action of every kind. To show to what an extent this wild and tumultuous legislation was carried, there came a telegram one day to this country, which stated, for the satisfaction of mankind, 'that no material alteration in the laws of France had been made by the Commune on the preceding day.' As I have said before, the conduct of the Commune is an extreme case; but something distantly similar to it may be observed throughout history in the conduct of every government that has

tion of the French Commune.

relied upon a single legislative assembly—King's Council, Council of Ten, Council of Three Hundred, or whatever name and form the one ruling body may have assumed.

De Tocqueville on a second Chamber.

As bearing upon the necessity of a second Chamber, the following words of De Tocqueville are closely to the point:—

'Je pense donc qu'il faut toujours placer quelque part un pouvoir social supérieur à tous les autres; mais je crois la liberté en péril lorsque ce pouvoir ne trouve devant lui aucun obstacle qui puisse retenir sa marche, et lui donner le temps de se modérer lui-même.'

Now, I would not have it supposed, from anything that has been said, that I am in the least degree pledged to maintain, that any second Chamber, that may exist in any part of the world, is the best fitted for correcting the evils, which I believe would, inevitably, be caused by the existence of one legislative body only, in any given State. It would be presumptuous to attempt to declare, what would be the best form of constitution for this second Chamber in any foreign country. I think, however, that it would be pusillani-

CHAP. IV.

mous not to attempt to say what, in my judgment, might be the best constitution for such a Chamber in our own.

House of Lords.

I confess, that I think that it is impossible, or, at least, that it would be very unwise, if it were possible, to maintain the House of Lords as a second Chamber for Great Britain, without considerable modifications in the constitution of that legislative body. As it is at present constituted, it does not do the work, or even provide the restraint, which a second Chamber should do, and should provide. It is more completely the victim of popular impulses than even the Lower House;

defects.

which, indeed, can hardly be called a victim at all, as, for the most part, it fairly reflects and shares those popular impulses. But, that body may justly be called a victim to popular impulses, which eventually is always sure to sacrifice, even its convictions, to the predominating influence of the other house; whereas, looking across the Atlantic for an example, we have often seen that the American Senate has most wisely and patriotically resisted popular impulses, especially in the conduct of foreign affairs.

CHAP. IV.

It is always a most difficult thing for a reformer, who perceives that a reform is wanted in a great institution, to lay down the exact lines upon which his reform should be constructed. He perceives, as I do at this moment, that a reform is needed in the particular matter of which he is treating; but he knows, that so soon as he submits some particular suggestions for that reform in question, he abandons the abstract for the concrete, and often is liable to seem to be answered upon the general question, because he himself has not been able to satisfy the world as to the wisdom or prudence of the particular suggestions he offers.

Difficulties of reform.

There are four changes which I venture to propose:

Reforms suggested to increase its strength.

1st. That there should be life-peerages granted by the Crown.

Life peerages.

2ndly. That certain offices, when held for a certain term of years, should entitle the man who has held them to a seat in the House of Lords.

Special peerages.

3rdly. That no hereditary peer should be able to take his seat in the House of Lords,

CHAP. IV.

until he had reached the age of thirty; or had sat in the House of Commons for five years.

Qualifications of hereditary peers.

4thly. That an hereditary noble should not be obliged to take his seat in the House of Peers, until ten years had elapsed from his succession to the peerage.

I do not pretend to say, that these are the wisest methods for procuring an efficient second Chamber, and also for strengthening the first Chamber. I am not enamoured of any of them; but they are those which have occurred to me as having some feasibility in them. All that I am convinced of is, that if the government of this country is to proceed in the rational and harmonious manner, in which it has hitherto proceeded; gathering towards it all those influences, all that knowledge, and all that experience, which are so rife in a nation of free men; a reform of the House of Lords must be instituted, which shall tend to attract and to combine these great qualifications for central government.

Reform in the House of Lords.

In this way, or in some other way, adopting similar principles, we shall be able to

make due use of the men amongst us who have received most culture, and have profited most from their experience.

I think, moreover—and this with me is a most potent thought—that we should, by some of the means I have indicated above, be able to obtain the immense advantage of bringing into our legislature, men of special acquirements, and of special knowledge. We should also be able to provide a place in our legislature for the most distinguished citizens in our colonies; and, in fine, I believe that we should thus attract to a legitimate centre, the ruling minds which are scattered throughout our vast dominions. At present there is always the danger of our legislation becoming local (or, as a satirist might say, parochial)—of our dominion over this multitude of mixed races, whom we very loyally and kindly seek to govern with insufficient information, being provincial and vice-regal, instead of imperial—and, in short, of our being a kingdom with semi-subject realms and loosely-held colonies, instead of a united empire.

Colonists in Parliament.

CHAPTER V.

THE RELATION BETWEEN THE POLITICAL AND PERMANENT OFFICERS OF STATE.

CHAP. V.

A KINDRED subject to legislation and administration, is that of the relative position and conduct of the principal legislative and administrative functionaries. It is an interesting point connected with government, to consider how permanent officers, and transitory political officers of a higher grade, should act together. It might naturally be expected, that this conjoint action would be somewhat difficult.

Political and permanent officers.

The permanent official.

The permanent officer — a permanent under-secretary, for instance — is generally chosen with great care. He is often a person who is distinguished for general knowledge and ability. And then, he is likely to have an amount of special knowledge which it would take many years of official drudgery

CHAP. V.

for the political chief to attain. In fact, to use a common phrase, he is the master of the situation; and he may be inclined to make an ungenerous use of his advantages. On the other hand, a political chief, conscious that all power really rests with him, that he has to undertake the defence of the Department in Parliament, and that he may be misled or overpowered by the special knowledge of the permanent functionary, would naturally, if he were a small-minded man, be a little tempted to be captious and over-bearing. Moreover, he is tempted to think, that unless he makes many comments and objections to the proposals of the permanent officer, he may be supposed not to understand the business at all. In short, there are temptations on both sides to injudicious conduct. But whether, to use a word which is a great favourite with the French people, there is so little that is *sinister* in the nature of the public men of this country, or whether it is, that men holding office become almost immediately attached to their Department, and identified with its interests,

The political chiefs.

Their difficulties.

Their general relations.

CHAP. V.

the practical result is, that these high permanent officers, and these still higher political personages, as a rule, get on very well together. I have uniformly found, that these two classes of official men speak well of one another; become attached to one another; and, in short, generally end by becoming sincere friends. There is not, indeed, a better basis for lasting friendship, than that which is elicited, among public men, by working together for the same purpose—namely, the public good.

Mostly sincere friends.

I have thought it right to allude to this subject, because, though the apparent difficulties are got over in the smoothest way in the Government of Great Britain, the matter is one which should be carefully looked to, and considered in other governments, where the political difficulties are much greater, as the political world is divided very harshly into fiercely-contending parties.

CHAPTER VI.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, by which is meant the government exercised by local authorities, in any particular locality, is a good measure of the freedom and independence of the individuals composing a State. Many of its advantages are obvious—such, for instance, as the use to be made of special local knowledge; which kind of knowledge can hardly ever be mastered by a central authority.

Advantages of local government.

But there are also great indirect advantages attendant upon any system of political government, in which local government has a large sphere of action.

In the first place, it compels men who would not otherwise be versed in the functions of government, to learn and exercise the art of governing. Again, it furnishes employment for those busy, and somewhat restless,

It forms administrators.

CHAP. VI.

persons, who, if they do not find something to occupy their talents in local affairs, are apt to become agitators in Imperial affairs—and that too, with knowledge very disproportionate to their energy. Moreover, it tends to bring men of different classes together in the conduct of business; and there is hardly any way by which men can become better acquainted, and more readily learn the respective worth of each other, than by being thus associated.

Occupies restless spirits.

Brings different classes together.

Again—and this is a point of very great importance—it tends to make men tolerant in their judgments as to the conduct of Imperial affairs. Let a man's sphere of governing be ever so limited, he learns to appreciate some of the difficulties of government in general. He finds how hard a thing it is to make men of one mind, and to get real business of any kind carried forward, when there is great freedom of discussion and of action. Also, he becomes cognizant of some of those matters connected with government, which only experience can teach. For example, he learns the value, and somewhat even of the

Teaches the difficulties of government.

money worth, of a good agent. You will find, that almost every man who has been concerned in governing, is much more liberal as regards the payment, and the other rewards of agents, than the man who has had no experience in that direction. You will not find such a man joining in a senseless outcry against liberal payment for good work. He has discovered, that the first thing is to get good work done; and for this he will not grudge its adequate reward.

Value of good agents.

In few words, the man who has interested himself in local government, is likely to become a good judge of the proceedings of imperial government.

Now, there is one point connected with this matter to which I must advert, as being that which relates to the very essence of good local government. It is, that men of the higher classes should not refuse any opportunity of connecting themselves with local government, however humble may be the sphere of action proposed for them. They should not lay themselves out for election to offices connected with local go-

Higher classes should take part in local government.

CHAP. VI.

vernment; but they should never abstain from serving, when elected. Surely every man's neighbourhood may very fitly be an important centre of his action; and nothing, however minute, connected with the well-being of that neighbourhood, is beneath his notice, or unworthy even of his utmost attention. Besides, he will never have a better opportunity of acting in concert with those placed in a humbler position than himself, and learning what they think and wish for, than he will when dealing with matters relating to local government.

Advantages of local government.

It would be premature, and it would be somewhat pedantic, to attempt to define, before there is any occasion for defining, the exact extent of the areas over which separate local governments should have governance.

Limits of local government.

It would also be difficult to form an exact list of the subjects of local welfare, which should be submitted to local control. One subject, however, there certainly is, which especially belongs to local government, and that is the sanitary well-being of the local

Subjects for local control.

community. This may be taken as an undoubted case, in which local government is desirable; and I proceed, in reference to it, to say what should, in my judgment, be the relations between local and central authority.

It is almost needless to observe that, if these relations are to be useful to the community, they should be thoroughly harmonious. At any rate, they should not, by their nature, be antagonistic.

There is no doubt that, in a country like Great Britain, possessing a metropolis to which all the highest intellect, and the greatest experience gravitate, there will be a mass of hoarded knowledge, which would be invaluable even for the conduct of minute local affairs. This is especially to be seen in the application of sanitary science. I have spoken of the great advantage to be derived from special local knowledge, and from a familiarity with local affairs possessed by the people of any locality. But, as in all human affairs there is a drawback attendant upon any advantage, so, from this very familiarity

Advantages of local knowledge.

CHAP. VI.

with their own neighbourhood, the local authority sometimes fails to recognise a local danger, or disadvantage. I am not now making this statement upon a mere abstract view of the question. I have over and over again observed, that some important cause of sanitary ill-being has not been discovered by persons interested in the locality, when a skilled person, sent down into the neighbourhood by central authority, has at once conjectured what was the disturbing cause, and has afterwards proved that he was right in his conjecture. I have even known, that something, which was considered by the inhabitants of the district to be a thing of beauty or of usefulness, has been the cause of great sanitary mischief—a cause easily discerned by a skilled person, accustomed to consider every variety of sanitary derangement. Nay more, I have known a town to be suffering under great mortality, produced by causes, which all the local skill was unable to discern, which causes were immediately detected by an eminent London physician, who happened accidentally to have two or

Local knowledge aided by central authority.

three cases of illness among the inhabitants of that town, brought up to him for consultation.

The object of the preceding sentences has been, to show how great may be the value of central knowledge, brought to bear upon any local difficulty or danger, connected with sanitary affairs. A similar argument will probably hold good, to a certain extent, as regards *all* local affairs.

Value of central authority.

It would be very desirable, that the local authority should be on such good terms with the central authority, that it should not hesitate to ask for aid and advice in any difficulty. At the same time it must be remembered, that the duty of the central authority is of an Imperial nature; and that, whether its aid is asked for, or not, it must not, knowingly, allow the existence of dangerous centres of disease in any particular locality. Its main duty must ever consist in inspection. And here I come to another point, which I regard to be one of the utmost importance. I do not think that it is the duty of the central authority to take upon itself, except in cases

To be recognised as a friend.

Inspecting not superseding local authority.

CHAP. VI.

Except in extremity.

of extreme urgency, the task of executing local works, and of raising local taxation for the purpose of executing those works. I am, therefore, constrained to say that some of our recent legislation was not well-considered in this respect; and I think that the result has shown that this was the case. When the local authority has proved itself recalcitrant, it has been found almost impossible for the central authority to carry out the works, which, in their judgment, were requisite; and for the execution of which, they were left to provide the funds by local taxation.

Defects in recent legislation.

There remain, however, the cases of extreme urgency, where the central authority is convinced that, both for the locality and for the State in general, certain things should be done, which the local authority resolutely refuses to do. These cases will be rare. They should be met, as I think, by laying all the facts before Parliament, and demanding a local Act for the special purpose in question.

Exceptional cases.

If Parliament is not sitting, power might be given to the Privy Council, or to any

office under which sanitary matters may ultimately be placed,[1] to take the necessary steps for executing the works required, and providing the requisite funds. But I do not think that, as a general rule, it should be incumbent upon the central authority to remedy the *laches* of the local authority, by undertaking functions for the exercise of which the central authority is singularly unfit.

How to be met.

It must be borne in mind that the words 'central authority' are very 'prave 'ords,' as Fluellen would have said; but that, when you come to look at the thing closely, 'central authority' means four or five clever and able men, with a staff of secretaries and clerks; and perhaps with a body of inspectors, who are skilled persons in their several departments of knowledge. But, taken altogether, an office which has perhaps a great name and great authority, is, after all, not a body competent to rule or manage local affairs in detail, and can only give judicious advice, and, in rare cases, judicious aid, to the local

What central authority really is.

[1] This was written before the passing of the Act constituting the Local Government Board.

CHAP. VI.

authority, which must do the work that properly belongs to it.

It is also to be remembered, that any government Office which has now, or hereafter may have, the control of sanitary affairs, will have not only those affairs entrusted to its supervision, but many other affairs; and that sufficient time and energy will, for the most part, be altogether wanting for its general business, if it is called upon to carry out those details of work which strictly belong to local authority, and in which it should, at the utmost, have had only the duties of advice, aid, and supervision, imposed upon it.

CHAPTER VII.

ON ATTRACTING ABLE MEN TO THE SERVICE OF GOVERNMENT.

THIS, and several of the following chapters, will be devoted to considering some of the chief aids that may be obtained for government. Among the foremost of these aids, may surely be placed the attraction of able men to the government service.

Aids needed by government.

There is an absolute need for men. Machinery will not do their work: in fact, the more refined, and the more potent the machinery, the more intelligent must be the men to guide it. Government is not exempt from this general rule; and, as its affairs are more important than those of any private individual, it mostly requires men of especial ability to conduct those affairs. 'I have two hundred millions in my coffers,' exclaimed Napoleon, 'and I would give them all for Ney.' It is

Able men essential.

CHAP. VII.

not often that a Napoleon is in desperate need of a Ney; but the great conqueror's opinion of the value of a man is well indicated by the above saying; and it is an opinion which ought to have great weight with all persons who have anything to do with the choice of men to fill offices of any kind.

Especially in present age.

I would especially notice, that there is more need now of good men in government employment than there ever was—because other entities are so strong. In these days Literature, Science, Art criticism of all kinds, and interests of all kinds are more powerful than they ever were: and as government has occasionally to combat with, or to protect itself against these powers, it is desirable that it, too, should proportionately increase in power.

Competitive system.

In Great Britain we have, of late, adopted the system of competitive examination, as a means of discerning men's qualifications for office. In my judgment, although the system has long been adopted in China, it is a most inadequate one for its purpose. It detects qualifications which are little needed, while,

it fails, inevitably, to discover those which are most needed. It is a bringing back of the world to the schools. The main reasons given for its adoption are, that it prevents jobbery, relieves men in power from importunity, and encourages education.

Its advantages.

These may be very good objects; but, unfortunately, they are foreign to the main object, which is to choose fit men, and, if possible, the fittest men, for certain employments. Competitive examination is mainly a mode of relieving those persons, who ought to have the burden of making a choice, from the responsibility of so doing.

Foreign to main object.

How ineffective this mode of procedure is likely to be, may be inferred from the following statement. You wish to ascertain that a man will be zealous, faithful, true, reticent, cautious, and capable of dealing rapidly with current business; and, also, as he advances in office, of taking a certain amount of responsibility upon himself. You think that you have accomplished this end by ascertaining that he can construe Latin, and has been crammed with a certain knowledge of the facts of

Its inefficiency.

CHAP. VII.

history, which facts, having been devoured rather than digested, stand very little chance of being well used by him for the future, and will probably be entirely forgotten.

Proposal of a humorous person.

As a humorous person, I know, is wont to say, 'If you were to try the candidates in whist, there might be a chance of discerning whether they would be capable of dealing with the real business of the world.'

Talent for acquiring knowledge not always necessary.

There is one very important point to be considered in reference to this question; and that is, not only is the talent for acquiring knowledge not a talent of imperative necessity, as regards the conduct of the business of the world, but it is absolutely injurious in some respects. Young people very often manifest a readiness to acquire knowledge merely from a certain docility of mind, which makes few enquiries, is easily satisfied with what the teacher tells it, and never cares to take an original and independent view of what it is taught. These qualifications are exactly opposed to those which are wanted in the conduct of business. Putting aside, however, for the moment, any conjectures about

CHAP. VII.

the matter, I venture to assert that much of the greatest and the best work in the world has been done by those who were anything but docile in their youth. This bold statement applies, I believe, not only to the greatest men in Science, Literature, and Art, but to the greatest men in official life, in diplomacy, and in the general business of the world. If I were asked to point out the men who, in my experience of public affairs, have shown the most remarkable competency for the conduct of business, they would, in several instances, prove to be men of very limited education. One of the principal qualifications for the conduct of business is decisiveness; and surely no one will contend that decisiveness is, of necessity, promoted by the acquisition of much knowledge in youth.

Great men often of limited culture.

What I have said above applies principally to men who are to be chosen for the permanent Civil Service of the country. The statesmen who have to take a more prominent part, whose business it is to argue, to explain, if possible to be eloquent, may doubt-

Highest education beneficial to statesmen.

CHAP. VII.

less be greatly benefited by an education of the highest kind.

Certain primary tests requisite.

There is also another point on which I would guard my previous statements. When I say that I entirely object to competitive examination, I do not mean that there should be no examination at all for the candidates for office; but it need not be competitive. There are certain primary requisites, the existence of which may be perfectly ascertained by examination. For example, there are qualifications of the most elementary kind in reading, writing (alas! how seldom attained), and arithmetic, which may well be insisted upon. I would also add, that the digesting of documents, and the making abstracts from them, are real tests of the fitness of men for official life. But when you insist upon acquirements in history, or Latin, or mathematics, the question is entirely different.

There is another point I would urge. Some of the greatest men never do their best until they have realities to deal with. It is in vain to tell them that the acquisition of knowledge

is a reality. They will persevere in being playful, indolent, and disinclined to acquire knowledge. Once, however, bring these men into real life: once show them that what they do, may have serious consequences, and they are sobered as it were. They exert all their powers, and are often found to be the most consummate managers of human affairs.

The foregoing remarks have been directed against the system of competitive examination. That system has, however, prevailed. The only thing now to be done, is to implore all those who have power in the matter to resist this system being carried to its utmost extent; to make exceptions wherever they can, and to reserve for themselves some power of choice.

Exceptions to be made when possible.

I feel it but right to say here, something respecting the motives of the eminent men who have introduced the system of competitive examination. They saw before them a great evil—not exactly the evil of what is called jobbery—but they found that parliamentary influence was used to an excessive extent, and that appointments were given,

Motives for competitive examination.

CHAP. VII.

Abuse of Parliamentary influence.

not according to merit, but according to pure favour, and it seemed to them that anything would be better than that.

So, as often happens, the pendulum went from one extreme to the other. It was held, that because a good choice was prevented by reason of imperious and unwelcome solicitation, it would be desirable to take away all power of choice from those persons who, it must be admitted, if left perfectly free to choose, would have been the best persons to make the selection. Other motives also influenced the promoters of the new system; as, for example, that education would be greatly furthered by the institution of competitive examination. Moreover, it seemed to fall in with the democratic tendencies of the day, and was so far attractive as a political measure.

Furtherance of education.

All I contend for is, that it will be found to fail quite as much as, if not more, than the previous system did: notwithstanding all the sinister influences which were brought to bear upon that. The endeavour to get rid of these influences was a worthy one. But

it was not desirable that the old system should be made to give way to one of such a mechanical character as that which is at present in force. After all, if you wish men in power to be enabled to choose their agents and subordinates wisely, you must free them from the necessity of yielding to claims, based solely upon education and acquirements, as well as from the imperious demands of political expediency.

Choice of agents.

Almost all rules are bad which tend to limit the choice of men for employments of any kind. Any rule, for instance about excess of age, is injudicious. The powers of different men are so various, that it is not too much to say, that men are often twenty years younger, or older, than their age according to years. If we look at the great events, not only in ancient history, but at those of the last few years, we shall see that the greatest of these events have been carried to a prosperous issue by men who were anything but young.

Limitation of choice bad.

Of age.

Now, why should we confine our view in this matter to generals, and kings, and statesmen? If the view is good for anything, it

CHAP. VII.

applies to all men; and a more foolish thing is seldom done by any government, by any minor body of men, or by any individual, than in fixing a limit of age as regards the employment of its or his agents.

Other disqualifications.

Similar statements might be made as regards several of the disqualifications, which are frequently set out in the shape of rules and bye-laws, and which prevent men from choosing those of their fellow-men who would be most capable of conducting their affairs.

Pecuniary tests.

Pecuniary disqualification is an instance of what I mean. You think to gain a good man to manage your affairs, because he happens to have a small share in your undertaking. It is a great error. You want him to do something well which you are going to tell him to do. If he has been wisely chosen, and is an able man, his pecuniary interest in the matter will be mere dust in the balance, when compared with the desire which belongs to all such men to do their work well. On the other hand, by insisting upon a pecuniary qualification, you may easily prevent yourself from being able to choose the best man. Rules of

this kind generally punish most the men who make them. The real reason why men, even of great ability, whether in government or in other public bodies, have circumscribed themselves by these rules and these disqualifications is, that they are not sufficiently penetrated by the idea of the value of having the right man in the right place. The advantage to the world of having men rightly placed is almost inconceivable. All success depends upon it. It is a thing which cannot be overestimated. Through the most adverse circumstances, the able man will form a path for himself and others.

The right placing of men.

There are certain people who will do, and do very well, almost anything that you bring them to do. They must, however, be fed with work. They will not find work for themselves. They are the very persons who do well in competitive examinations, but they are not capable of originating anything.

Now the business of the world is continually taking new forms. The troubles of the world are also continually taking new aspects. Nothing, therefore, is more needed in public

Need for men of originating minds.

CHAP. VII.

Offices, than that there should be at least a few men of originating minds, who perceive and recognise the changes in human affairs, and are perpetually on the watch to make the working of their respective offices capable of coping with these changes of thought, of opinion, or of action in the outer world. Such men, I contend, must be looked out for, by methods very different from those which are at present in vogue.

The foregoing have been general considerations, but they are peculiarly applicable to the conduct of government.

Pitt and Wolfe.

I have been always very much struck by the way in which the elder Pitt chose Wolfe to command the expedition to Canada. Wolfe had not the military standing which might alone have justified Pitt in choosing him as the leader of that expedition. But Pitt had heard of this man. The business of every statesman is to know a good deal about men. Pitt sent for Wolfe, and noted well his answer to the question, whether he could do the work that had to be done. The great Minister understood men; and by that electric sym-

pathy which enables one great man to judge almost instantaneously about another, saw that this was the right man to be a leader, and that he might safely intrust him with the conduct of a hazardous expedition. CHAP. VII.

It is such insight, on the part of statesmen, that I would trust to in our times, believing that it would be far more valuable, and lead to much better results, than the limitation, by nice rules of forethought, of the choice made by statesmen of those agents who, though obscure, and even rarely known by name to the public, form, as it were, the back-bone of the administration of every country in the world.

In answer to the foregoing, it will at once be said, 'If statesmen are to be thus, with scarcely any limit or rule, intrusted with the choice of subordinates, how are we to provide against jobbery?' Fear of jobbery.

Now, with respect to this ugly term 'jobbery,' I must say a few words which merely embody my own personal experience. I have served under many political chiefs. I suppose I must have been very fortunate, that is, if this accusation of jobbery is a just one, for, if

CHAP. VII.

I were put in a witness-box, and asked upon oath, to disclose any particular instance of jobbery of which I had been cognisant, I should be unable to name a single one. I have known my chiefs give anxious hours to the consideration of the appointments they had to make. They have sometimes consulted me upon these matters, showing me various letters of recommendation and testimonials. I have never had to protest against 'jobbery.' All that I have generally had to say was, 'See the man of whom you at present have the most favourable opinion: see him before you make up your mind finally to appoint him. For there is something in the aspect of a man, which letters of recommendation and testimonials will not tell you.'

Practical care in choosing men.

Personal interviews desirable.

I do not mean to maintain, that under any system of choice great mistakes will not be made, for it is one of the most difficult problems of life to ascertain, beforehand, how a man will conduct himself when he is placed in any particular office. Strangely enough, some of the greatest errors, as regards the choice of men, which I have known to be

Occasional errors of choice inevitable.

committed under the old system, were committed by too much attention being given to those supposed qualifications which are now being crystallized into the main system for official appointment. I will give an instance of what I mean, which I can without reserve, as the persons principally concerned are dead. An office requiring great capability in dealing with business, fell vacant. The political chief was extremely anxious to make a good appointment. He instituted careful enquiries about the rising young men of the day. One morning, when I came into his room to receive instructions, he said to me with great glee, 'I have found a good man for this office. His name is ——. Double-first at Oxford; and, as you know, has distinguished himself since.' The man in question was appointed to the office. He really was an able man in his way, but he had one fatal defect. He was slow. To speak in the language of men who are versed in horsemanship, he 'could not go the pace' that was required. There were, for example, about ten matters of business which had to be

Anxiety to make good appointments.

CHAP. VII.

brought to him in the course of the day. He was an exacting, fastidious kind of man, and could never be persuaded to settle more than three of them. The consequence was, that the business in question fell off from him, and was carried to a man in another department, of very limited education, but who was a fine reasoner, a master of expression, and altogether an admirable man of business. Now the error of my chief, and, I must confess, my error too, for I believed that our office was most fortunate in securing the services of this young man, was in giving too much credence to that 'double-first,' and to consequent distinction in matters which had nothing whatever to do with promptitude in business.

Slowness a fatal defect.

What now is a most valuable aid in the choice of a man to fill up any office is, the opinion, if you can get it honestly given, of older and more experienced men, about the qualifications of a candidate. Here, again, I will give a practical instance of what I mean. There was a rising young statesman, whose

Valuable opinions of experienced men.

CHAP. VII.

merits, however, had hitherto only been acknowledged by making him Master of the Buckhounds—an office not necessarily requiring much skill in statesmanship. Two elderly statesmen were discussing the merits of this young man. They agreed that there was the stuff in him, to make a man of the utmost eminence in statesmanship. They are both dead now, or they might have seen how amply their prognostications have been fulfilled. For they would see him acting, under most difficult circumstances, as the leader of his party in one of the Houses of Parliament. With all respect for that eminent personage, I am by no means sure that he would have arrived at his present position if he had had to attain it through a series of competitive examinations. How should we have been able to ascertain, by the means of such examinations, his tact, his keen appreciation of the weight of argument on the other side, as well as on his own side, his forbearance in debate, and, which is one of the most remarkable qualifications he possesses,

Example of the non-competitive system.

CHAP. VII.

his skill in eliciting most rapidly, from a large mass of facts submitted to him, those which are essential to the subject, and which will suit his purpose? And yet, I fear this statesman is one of those who believes in, or least consents to, this system of competitive examination, not seeing that what he feels and knows would be inapplicable to men in his position, is also inapplicable as regards the choice of men to fill inferior offices in the State.

A novel proposition.

A man, who has had large and long experience of the public service, when speaking of the choice of men to fill public Offices, has been heard to say, 'All would go well in the way of choice, if only each man were allowed to choose his own immediate inferior.' This novel proposition is not likely ever to come into vogue; but it has great merits to recommend it, and there are occasions in which it might be partially adopted. For instance, when a Department of the State is divided into several sections, and a vacancy occurs in any one of them, it is probable that

there is no one who would take such pains in making, or recommending a good appointment, as the person who has the charge of the work of that section, as the head of it.

Dependence on inferiors.

The man who made this original suggestion might have urged, as a potent motive for its adoption, that each one of us is more dependent upon his immediate inferior, than even upon his immediate superior. It is the inferior who can most surely make one's life miserable, by tiresomeness, or misconception, or inactivity.

Importance of keeping men content

Finally, when by any process of selection, you are fortunate enough to have got good men to serve you, you must take care to keep them satisfied. As Sir Henry Taylor has well remarked in his 'Statesman,' that most men are disheartened if they do not, in the course of a certain period, say ten years, obtain a distinct rise in their positions. This I believe to be true; and it requires considerable care to provide for this desirable object on behalf of your best servants, whether public or private. To do so is especially

By due promotion.

CHAP. VII.

difficult in public offices, because the rate of promotion must greatly depend upon the number of persons employed in the office, and also upon various accidental circumstances. It is impossible to lay down any precise rules for the attainment of this object; and I can only remark, that it is one which, from time to time, requires attention from those political personages who are placed at the head of public Departments.

Absolute rules impossible.

It must be remembered, that the work of the permanent civil servants of the Crown is necessarily of an obscure character. It is not rewarded in the manner in which other service is often rewarded in the outer world, namely, by increasing fame and reputation. The merits of the most eminent of the permanent civil servants are known to very few persons; which makes their position especially dependent upon the discriminating kindness of their chiefs. There are but two modes of rewarding eminent public service of the kind alluded to, namely, increase of pay, and the conferring of honours. The consideration of

Absence of public applause.

Rewards available.

this last mode of reward naturally brings me to the discussion of the general subject of honours, which I shall deal with in the next chapter. CHAP. VII.

Before, however, commencing that subject, I must add something which, to my mind, has a certain appropriateness in regard to many things that have been said in the foregoing pages.

In one of Schiller's plays there is a Moor who has done good service to his master. That master has the folly, more than once, to dismiss the Moor somewhat abruptly, and to intimate that there will soon come a time when he will not need his services any more. This rankles in the heathen's breast, and when alone, he more than once shows what his feelings are, by such words as these: 'The Moor has done his work: the Moor can go.'[1] Before going, however, he resolves to undo all his work, by betraying his master, who is at the head of a conspiracy. The Moor and his master.

[1] „Der Mohr hat seine Arbeit gethan: der Mohr kann gehen."

CHAP. VII.

Now, there is no danger in Great Britain of betrayal on the part of public servants; but the reflection contained in those few simple words, 'The Moor has done his work: the Moor may go,' is a very chilling and depressing one; and it is not desirable that it should enter largely into the minds of those who are connected with the public service.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF HONOURS.

CHAP. VIII.

THE conferring of honours is a most important function of government; and, throughout the world, it is a function in which there is much abuse. In George III.'s time there was a man who had rendered some political service to the government, (political service in those days not being a thing of the highest merit), and this man wished to be allowed to drive through the park. 'No, no,' said the King, 'we cannot do that; but you may make him an Irish baron if you like;' and an Irish baron he was made. This is a ludicrous instance of the abuse of honours; but, without descending into particulars, which would be a very invidious mode of procedure, we may admit that the British government has not, for several generations, distinguished itself by the way in which it

Importance of conferring honours rightly.

A case abuse.

CHAP. VIII.

has exercised the high prerogative of conferring honours.

Honours not less wanted as civilization advances.

There is a foolish notion that, as civilization advances, honours are less coveted, and are less potent. This is an entire mistake.

The first Napoleon, whatever his demerits may have been, was a man who, it must be admitted, knew something of the world.

Napoleon's opinion on honours.

There is a memorable observation of his, on one Sunday afternoon, when he heard the church bells ringing, and when he said that 'Religion and honours were the two things by which mankind may be governed'—an assertion which, I think, will not be disputed by those who have had much converse with their fellow-men.

Abuse of them illustrated.

I shall take a peculiar mode of expressing all I think with regard to the abuses at present existing in the distribution of honours, illustrating my meaning by four fables. The first will be from that eminent fabulist, the Russian Krilof. The other fables are from a very inferior hand.

Krilof's fable.

Krilof tells us, that the eagle promoted a cuckoo to the rank of nightingale. The

CHAP. VIII.

cuckoo undertook its part, and sang accordingly. The other birds fled away in disgust, or were convulsed by that twittering which corresponds to human laughter.

Cuckoo and eagle.

The cuckoo complained to the eagle, and said, 'I have been appointed nightingale to these woods, and yet the birds dare to twitter at my singing.'

The eagle replied, 'I am a king, but I am not God. I can order a cuckoo to be styled a nightingale, but to make a nightingale out of a cuckoo—that I cannot do.'[1]

The troublesome boar.

I now proceed to give some fables of the English author. There was a boar who rooted up his master's pastures. The farmer resolved to put a stop to this, by putting a ring in the nose of the boar. This was soon done; and though the animal made a great noise about the operation, it was not more painful than putting ear-rings into a girl's ears—a common practice in nations not supposed to be barbarous.

The boar was very proud of his nose-ring,

[1] *Krilof and his Fables*, by W. Ralston, of the British Museum. Strahan and Co., 1871.

CHAP. VIII.

and told the other denizens of the farmyard that he was the only animal among them worthy of being thus decorated.

When, however, the boar was driven into the open pastures, he found that he was unable to get at the sweet roots, and must content himself with what he found on the surface.

Now swine are very clever creatures, and the boar said to himself, 'I see why they gave me this odious nose-ring. It was not for honour, but to prevent me from rooting in the fields so much.'

Therein he was wiser than many men, who do not perceive that honours are conferred upon them, to prevent them from continuing to be as troublesome and mischievous as they have hitherto proved themselves to be.

Fable of the king and his counsellors.

The next fable is this. On an island, which has been a long time discovered, but of which I forget the name, there was a simpleton, who had been blessed with a clever grandfather, and a prudent father; so, that when the father died, that simpleton possessed many bags of gold. Whereupon the king of the

island said, 'Bring me the pebble that shines like a star, and I will tie it on his arm, and he shall be one of my counsellors.' 'Nay, but his wisdom is of little account,' said one of the wisest and the most daring of the king's counsellors. 'Who am I,' replied the king, 'that I should contend with Providence? It is wise to favour those whom the gods favour. Besides, if I do not sometimes call a simpleton to my councils, how shall I know what the other simpletons think? And they are numerous in my kingdom, and must be cared for.'

The wandering tribe.

The fourth fable is this. In remote Thibet there was a wandering tribe. As they lived chiefly on milk and honey, and moved ever into fresher air, they lived very long lives. They had also a great respect for old age. But the destroyer, Time, is not to be baulked of his labours; and, even in this wandering tribe, as men grew old, they became less vigorous, or less wise, or less able to express their wisdom.

Their wanderings were confined to a narrower circle. They trod over again the same

CHAP. VIII.

ground; and there was scarcity in the camp for them and their herds.

A secret council was held by the young and the middle-aged members of the tribe, whereupon a shrewd man arose and said, 'Let us always pay honour to our grandfathers, but let us not be starved by them. There is a herb in the plains, from which a beautiful blue juice may be extracted. Let us make long robes, from the wool of our flocks, and colour them with the juice of this herb. Then let us put these robes of honour on the old men of the tribe whose wisdom is failing, or who can only mutter forth their wisdom indistinctly, so that we do not know what it means. When they have their long blue robes, they will not like to go through the bushes and the brambles, but will stay at home, with the women in the camp; and when we have found a new camping place, we can come back for them. Thus they will receive all due honour, and will not be an incumbrance upon our movements.'

Common motives for bestowal of honours.

These four fables indicate the spirit in which honours have too often been granted by

all modern governments. There is honour given to one man from pure favour, without any pretence of merit on his part, as when the cuckoo was appointed by the eagle to be nightingale of the woods; but notwithstanding the favour of the eagle, the cuckoo could not sing.

Favour.

There is honour conferred upon another because he is tiresome, and, like the boar in the fable, is apt to injure his master by rooting too much.

Fear.

There is honour conferred upon a third, however small may be his deserts, merely because he is rich. Now when Reynard the Fox said that 'Gold lends mighty force to words,'[1] there was great truth in the remark, as in most of Reynard's sayings. But what he meant was, that gold should accompany the words, and not merely be uttered by those who profess much gold, and retain it.

Riches.

To a fourth, an honour is given because he is old and worn out, and his place is wanted for a wiser and stronger man; or, as

Age.

[1] „Kräftigen Nachdruck ſollte das Geld den Worten verleihen."

CHAP. VIII.

it often happens, not for a wiser and stronger man, but for one who can adapt himself to the new creed, whatever that may be.

To such a length has this last mode of giving honour gone, that a humorous person whom I know is wont to say 'Though a sickly man, I think I have some twenty years of life and work in me; but if the government of the day were to offer me an honour, I should go home to bed, and prepare for death; for I should know that my physician had betrayed me to them, and that he had discerned in me a likelihood of rapid failure of the vital powers. Otherwise, this honour would not have been offered to me. I am a meek man, and not willing to resist, when a decision, almost as sure as fate, has been pronounced upon me.'

I have dealt with this subject somewhat playfully; for, though it is a very serious matter, it will insist upon presenting itself to me in a somewhat ludicrous light. I might have given another instance, in which some great personage being received as a guest at a banquet, given by one who is accustomed to

give good cheer, forthwith rewards his entertainer by conferring upon him an honour.

Detrimental honours.

Now to speak most seriously, all these modes of conferring honour are a thorough detriment, and an abiding disgrace to government. The disgrace will be easily perceived by all thoughtful people; but the detriment is not quite so clear. What, however, we want in the award of honours is, that it should be an aid and an encouragement to men in the full possession of their powers of mind and body; should be made without fear or favour; should not be used as a gag to silence the tiresome, or as a clog to slacken the pace of those who are prone to be too swift in their recklessness; should not be employed as a bribe, to make men pleasantly resign offices, for which, from age or other causes, they are unfit or are supposed to be unfit; but that it should be made according to some principles of justice, and be so widely as well as impartially granted, that it should tend to adorn, dignify, and combine together, for the public good, the most deserving men throughout this vast empire.

How honours should not be used.

CHAP. VIII.

I do not mean to say that the recognition of a man's services, however tardy, is not a good and desirable thing, as being an expression of gratitude. Looking, however, at the matter from the point of view that a statesman should take, it seems, that an honour should not only be a recognition of past services, but that it should also give increased weight and influence to a man, who will continue to be of service to the State.

Advantage of a right system.

I cannot conclude this chapter without mentioning two important indirect advantages which would follow from a liberal and judicious system of awarding honours.

The first advantage would be, that due encouragement would be given to various kinds of merit and eminence. At present, that qualification which is chiefly rewarded and honoured in this country is the power of public speaking.

Evils of a wrong system.

Two evils proceed from this narrow system of reward and honour.

In the first place, this talent of public speaking is inordinately encouraged; and men rise to power who do not possess some

of the most important qualifications for making a good use of power. The second evil is, that other qualifications are discouraged, and that many men are led to undertake a career for which they are not fitted; while they neglect a career in which they might have done good service to the world.

The other great advantage, which would accrue from a more judicious mode of distributing honours, is of a thoroughly indirect character, but not on that account of less importance. It were to be wished, that a seat in Parliament were not so desirable an object, from a social point of view, as it certainly has become. There are some men who have attained to eminence in pursuits very foreign to Parliamentary life, but are not, on that account, unfitted for it. They are men who take a very wide interest in human affairs, and bring all their special knowledge to bear upon questions of legislation. They seldom shine in debate; but they are pre-eminent in committees; and, though not 'to the manner born,' they often prove to be most valuable members of Parlia-

Seats in Parliament.

CHAP. VIII.

ment. But, on the other hand, there are those who, whether from the possession of large tracts of land, or great riches, or perhaps by the exercise of qualities, which in no respect fit them to become legislators, have become notable, and who seek a seat in Parliament, merely in order to put a seal, as it were, upon the position they have attained in other pursuits. They would, probably, not be so ardent in the pursuit of this form of distinction, if other forms were open to them.

Political evils created.

Very serious political consequences follow upon this state of things. A number of men are introduced into Parliament, who, according to the hypothesis, have no especial claim to be there, and who occupy the place, we will not say of better men, but of men better trained to fill that position.

Demand for seats in Parliament excessive.

A still graver consequence follows. The demand for seats in Parliament becomes excessive in reference to the supply. It inevitably follows, that the person wishing to be elected is prone to make unreasonable concessions to every wish of the electors, and

not only of the electors as a body, but to any small section of electors which has any particular crotchet to further, or self-interest to serve, thereby the candidate is in imminent danger of becoming a delegate rather than representative.

The true relation between electors and elected.

I suppose that it will be admitted by all those persons who have studied representative government, that there is, speaking in the abstract, a certain relation which might subsist between the electors and the elected, which would be perfect of its kind. Such a relation would give a due influence to the electors, while it would preserve the enormous benefit to be derived by the comparatively unfettered thought of an able man, being brought to bear upon political questions.

It may well be doubted whether the elector has not now too potent an influence over the candidate, or over the elected person; and whether, thereby, there is not some fear lest we should dwarf the reasonable independence of thought and action which is essential to the making of a good representative?

CHAPTER IX.

COUNCILS, COMMISSIONS, BOARDS, AND OTHER SIMILAR AIDS TO GOVERNMENT.

CHAP. IX.

The use of councils.

THERE is hardly a more difficult thing connected with government, than to make good use of these aids to administration. There are certain matters which are best treated by the clear decisiveness of one man, while there are others which are decidedly best treated by conjoint counsel, or after having been submitted to a council.

In affairs of much perplexity and variety of circumstances, it very rarely happens that any one man is master of all the facts, and all the circumstances, which are needful to be known in order to arrive at an exhaustive result.

Moreover, in matters wherein there is danger of much odium, whatever determination may be arrived at, it certainly elicits

boldness of decision to act by means of a council or commission. The well-known passage in the Bible, 'In a multitude of counsellors there is safety,' has frequently been misconstrued. It does not allude to the safety of the counsel, but of the counsellors.

A text often misapprehended.

In a council, a timid man will be bold, or, at any rate, so far bold that he will be willing to take his full share of responsibility as one of a number; whereas, if he were the sole person to decide, he might be oppressed by the sense of responsibility, and endeavour to evade coming to any decision at all.

There are two principal heads under which councils may be classed. One in which the council is executive, and has not only a final decision in any matter submitted to it, but subsists as a permanent body; the other in which the council is purely consultative, and has only to give advice.

Two kinds of council: executive and consultative.

Moreover, there are other characteristics which tend to cause considerable differences in the constitution and functions of council,

CHAP. IX.

whether executive or consultative. A council may be representative as well as executive. Again, it may only have to decide upon some particular act to be done by it, but may not have to continue as an executive body in directing all the work that has to follow from that one act.

Special nature to be noted.

Great attention should be paid to the special nature of the council, by those who have to call it together, and to profit by its counsels. For example, in a purely consultative council, it will be found that the counsellors will be prone to ignore difficulties in action, and will recommend courses of conduct, which they might hesitate to recommend if they were the persons who would have to carry into effect their own recommendations.

Tendency of representative councils.

Again, a representative council will naturally have (whether consciously or unconsciously) an inclination to accommodate its proceedings to the state of knowledge and opinion of the outer world; and each counsellor will be prone to give advice, of such a

nature as those whom he represents would wish him to give. Doubtless this leaning towards the outer world will be greater or smaller, according to the more or less publicity given to the proceedings of the council.

In any council, you will have a great chance of hearing, not only what is best to be done, but what can be done with reference to the state of public feeling and opinion. You will have the opportunity of hearing what unwise persons may think, or have to say about the matter in question; and therein even a foolish, obstinate, argumentative, or perverse person may be very useful, and his presence in the council may be of much worth and significance.

Advantage derived from councils.

Altogether, there are immense advantages to be derived from councils; but these advantages will only be derived by those persons who know how to make the proper use of them. It is a sign of great weakness in a government, when it submits too much of its current business to councils, commissions, or bodies of a like nature; and it should be

CHAP. IX.

carefully noted what kind of business is fit to be submitted to the arbitrament of a council. The business should rather be of that nature which involves principles to be considered or rules to be determined. A council is a very unfit body to determine questions of language or expression; and will waste any amount of time in vain attempts to insure great nicety and accuracy of expression. That kind of work is seldom well done except by one man; and even the great masters of language require, while they are working, to be undisturbed and unfettered by criticism, and to be able to deal with the matter as a whole. No man expresses anything exactly like another man; and if you wish a document to have a certain clearness and completeness in its expression, it should, if possible, be drawn up by one person, or at least be finally submitted to one person, as far as the language is concerned.

Characteristics to be noted.

In the conduct of councils there are several things to be observed by those who would make judicious use of such bodies, and especially by those who are placed at the head

of them. In this world so many things are decided by fatigue. The council, if not guided by a skilful person in its discussions, will waste its time upon minor points, and in combating the unreason or the argumentativeness, of some one or more of its members; and then, at the last, a hasty decision has to be formed, which may be anything but the wisest which could be formed. Lord Bacon has given the world an essay on councils, full, as might be expected, of valuable thought, and not disdaining to discuss points apparently somewhat insignificant, such as the shape and size of the council table; but he does not notice the effect of weariness. This omission may be accounted for by the greater powers of endurance of our ancestors, who, moreover, were trained to listen to long discourses patiently, and were not so much oppressed by a variety of business as we, the men of the present generation, are. With us I doubt not that the effect of weariness is one of the main elements of decision in any assemblage of men.

CHAP. IX.

Fatigue an important element.

Then, there is always the difficulty of eli-

CHAP. IX.

citing the opinions of those members of the council, who are very reserved and modest in the expression of their opinions. I have known instances in which the man, most fitted to direct the council, has not once had an opportunity of fairly bringing forward what he has thought and felt upon the matter in question. And that, too, in a council, commission, or board, which has sat for many days to consider the particular question. A man of the kind I mean, has strong and clear opinions; but is of a modest and retiring nature. In the course of the discussions he ascertains, or rather thinks that he ascertains, that his views will not meet with any response from his colleagues; and, accordingly, he is entirely silent about them. It is especially the business of the chairman, or leading person in the council, to take care that the views and opinions of these reserved persons should not fail to be brought forward. It often happens that the best choice of a chairman is to be made by selecting one who, perhaps, is not particularly cognizant of the matter in hand; but who is skilful in discerning charac-

Choice of a chairman.

ter, and has the tact and judgment necessary for eliciting fully the opinions of all those over whom he presides. This is especially necessary when the councils or such like bodies are of a temporary character; but it is also requisite in permanent Boards. A man may have had a place in such a Board for many years, and yet never have given an entirely unreserved opinion upon the matters that have come before him in that conjoint capacity.

Sections of councils should interchange duties.

There is another point of practice to be considered in reference to permanent Boards. In order to facilitate the transaction of business, special matters are entrusted to particular sections of these Bodies. If this practice is made absolute, and there is no interchange of duties, much of the value of a council, or other governing body, may be lost. The head of the Department should take care to vary the duties of these sections, and occasionally to contrive to obtain that diversity of opinion upon important matters, which prevents their falling into a course of abject routine, as will be the case if the same

CHAP. IX.

class of subjects is always submitted to the same section of the Board.

In the construction of councils there is a practice frequently to be observed which seems to me most objectionable, and that is, the placing a number of *ex-officio* counsellors on the council. I suppose there must be some advantage in this proceeding, as it has been adopted in all ages, and by most nations. But it seems to me to be one of those timid, insincere modes of action, which are sure to lead to unfavourable results, even though it may be difficult to point out the exact nature of the injury done. There are, however, two manifest objections to this mode of procedure. One is, that the responsibility of the acting few must thereby be diminished; and the other is, that fit men are kept out of the council, because it appears already to be sufficiently large.

Ex-officio members of council of little advantage.

There is another remark which I will venture to make in reference to almost all councils, and other similar Bodies, called together to deliberate or direct. This is, that, as a general rule, these Bodies should not be

unpaid. Payment, even of very small sums, inevitably carries with it an increase of responsibility. In some great central sun it may be possible to get the best work done gratuitously; but in the minor planetary bodies, such as our Earth, I doubt whether this can ever be accomplished. I have said 'the best work' advisedly, for I do not doubt that work can often be moderately well done without any payment being made for it.

Special utility of councils.

In fine, the utility of councils may be divined from this one fact—that no one man is as wise as all other men, or even as any four or five other men. He may be swifter, he may be more decisive, but he is never so comprehensive and so various. From the earliest ages to the present time there have always been councils and similar aids to government; and there never will be any form of government, to the aid and enlightenment of which such bodies will not be summoned. He who knows how to make good use of them, and how, as much as possible, to avoid a certain weakness and dilatoriness inherent in them, will show forth one of the greatest

CHAP. IX.

merits which a statesman can possess. He cannot see and listen to the whole world; but, by making use of councils, he may attain to something of a cosmopolitan view, or, at any rate, may learn the views, wishes, and opinions of large bodies of his fellow-men. If he is very skilful, he may combine the advantages of varied thought and conjoint action, with somewhat of the singleness of purpose, and the directness of executive action, which are the property of an individual ruler.

Machiavelli's classification of intellects.

There is a chapter in Machiavelli's 'Prince,' in which he treats, in his lucid manner, of the qualifications which should be found in the secretaries and ministers of princes. In the course of that chapter he makes the following general remark:— 'There are three kinds of intellects: one kind understands by its own insight; the second discerns those things which another understands; and the third neither understands of its own accord, nor by the demonstration made by another person: the first kind of intellect is most excellent, the second

excellent, the third useless.'[1] The foregoing is not an ill-arranged division of intellects; but I venture to think that certain additions might be made to it, or, at any rate, certain sub-divisions might be introduced. For instance, there is the intellect which combines the advantages of the two former of Machiavelli's classes—namely, the intellect which can discern very well, by its own force and insight, but is also equally skilled in seizing at once, and benefitting by what Machiavelli calls the 'demonstration' of others. Again, there is, certainly, the intellect which, however powerful, and justly coming within the first class, is affected by that peculiar want of sympathy which makes it prone to reject, at once, whatever is offered by another mind. The former of these two subdivisions of intellect will make the proper use of councils as of the individual intellects with which

Might well be enlarged.

[1] E perchè sono di tre generazioni cervelli: l'uno intende per se; l'altro discerne quelli che altri intende; e il terzo non intende per se stesso, nè per dimostrazione di altri: quel primo è eccellentissimo, il secondo eccellente, il terzo inutile.—*Il Principe*, cap. xxii., De' segretarj de' principi.

CHAP. IX.

it may be brought in contact. The latter is, for the most part, incapable of making a due use of other men's intellects; and, in the present day, when the range of a statesman's vision is required to be so extensive, and when there are so many more demands upon his time, than there were upon the time of statesmen in former days, this defect will be found to be a defect of the most serious nature.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRIVY COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN.

IT seems possible that, as the world advances, new forms of government, or, as I should rather say, newly-constituted bodies of men assembled for governing, may be devised or adopted according to the needs which, from time to time, may arise for fresh government material.

New modes of government possible.

Now there is in Great Britain a most serviceable body of men, which has extensive functions thrown upon it, and which I conceive has hardly ever been sufficiently noted by constitutional historians. I mean the Privy Council. I do not know that in any other country there is anything exactly analogous to the Privy Council of England; and there have been occasions of danger in the histories of most nations, when the existence of such a body would have been a great

Privy Council of Great Britain.

CHAP. X.

safeguard to the State—while in ordinary times, it would have been of great service to the State. If we look at the constitution of the Privy Council, it must be owned, that it is a very felicitous one; and, speaking in the abstract, gives promise of high utility. Doubtless its constitution was not designed to be what it is now; but the thing has grown up to be what it is,[1] as indeed has happened in regard to several of the most important governing bodies in Great Britain. The peculiar felicity of the constitution of the

Its constitution.

[1] The functions of the Privy Council in ancient times were not very dissimilar from those which are performed by it at the present time. Those functions were legislative, judicial, and administrative. Sometimes, as Mr. Hallam mentions, the Privy Council made ordinances 'upon request of the Commons in Parliament, who felt themselves better qualified to state a grievance than to provide a remedy.' It was in the constitution of the Board that it differed from the Council of modern times. It was entirely the creature of the King. For example, under Edward the First, the Privy Council consisted of his Ministers for the time being, including the King's Serjeant, the Attorney-General, and some of the Judges. It was not a Council retaining in its body those persons who had filled high offices of State, and who, in its present constitution, are not displaced because their party is gone out of power.

CHAP. X.

Privy Council consists in its including almost all those persons who have borne high office in the country. We have in it, therefore, a body which attaches and assimilates to itself the most tried, if not the most capable, men of all parties that have in turn predominated in the State.

Administration rarely concerned with party questions.

Of the matters that come before government to be decided, there is perhaps not one in a hundred that is of a purely party nature. I speak, of course, of administration, and not of legislation. But, notwithstanding that the immense majority of the matters in question have nothing to do with politics, party spirit would often be suspected to be concerned in the decision of them. It is, therefore, most useful that there should be a body, formed of the best men of business of all parties, from amongst whom committees may be chosen to hear and decide upon many of the vexed questions of the day.

Benefit of mixed committees.

They are still used.

The power of calling such committees into being, has by no means fallen into desuetude; and, no doubt, it must give much satisfaction to those persons whose claims are decided by

CHAP. X.

the Privy Council, to perceive that their cases are heard before committees composed of men of different political opinions.

Power of the Privy Council

This, however, is not the only use of a Privy Council. It is in times of emergency that its merits are most fully tested. The great art of government would be, to combine the power of despotic action in times of emergency, with great latitude of freedom in ordinary times. A State is very poorly off for governing power which, on any emergency, has to resort to the cumbrous expedient of summoning legislative assemblies, and waiting to act in accordance with their views. 'On the other hand, it is hardly to be expected, especially in these times, when responsibility is dreaded more than anything, that 'the Executive,' as it is called, should act with the necessary speed and vigour on occasions of great danger and difficulty.

Its high utility.

It is then, that, before all things, you want a consultative body, not of large numbers, not of one form of politics, not inexperienced in business; but which has the power to direct the immediate execution of the mea-

CHAP. X.

sures it may resolve to take. Such a body Great Britain is fortunate enough to possess in her Privy Council—a body, as I have said before, unknown elsewhere; and it is to be hoped that amidst the many changes which are to be seen in these times, if any change is to be made in the Privy Council, it may be such as will tend to strengthen, rather than to weaken that important body.

Suggestions for its improvement.

There is an improvement which might be made in the constitution of the Privy Council; and that is, that men of tried capacity among the permanent officers of government should more frequently be made Privy Councillors. And, moreover, I venture to think that eminent men from our Colonies, and those who have distinguished themselves in colonial administration as civil servants of the Crown, should occasionally be added to the Privy Council.

It is a curious thing to note, to how many of our Sub-departments the Privy Council has been the nursing mother. As civilization has advanced, new objects for governmental effort and governmental direction have arisen.

CHAP. X.

The matters connected with these objects have been, in the first instance, submitted to the Privy Council or a Committee of the Council. As the objects aimed at have become more extensive, and have been found to be in consonance with the wishes of the public, the business relating to them has greatly increased. Ultimately it has been found advisable to form separate Departments to deal with, and control the various matters in question. This is the origin of several Departments. Doubtless it has been a very advantageous origin, for the new Department has come to the management of the subject in question with much of the experience that has been gained by the Privy Council, and yet with that freshness of thought and vigour of action which naturally belong to a new Department, chosen for a special purpose.

Origin of some Departments.

In what I have said above respecting the Privy Council, I have only given an instance of the existence of a governing body which is happily to be found in our own country, and which I think might most profitably be adopted in other countries.

CHAPTER XI.

ORGANIZATION.

AMONGST the talents imperatively required for the service of Government, first and foremost is the talent of organization. This talent, in its various degrees, is wanted for all kinds of government—from the government of a family to that of an empire. In its highest degree it is exceedingly rare. There is a delusion, as I think, prevailing amongst mankind, that this talent belongs, in an especial degree, to certain races. Each nation, perceiving and feeling the want of organization in its own affairs, is apt, with becoming modesty, to suppose, that the talent in question exists, in a high degree, amongst its neighbours, and is exemplified in the conduct of their affairs. We were wont to imagine, and boldly to state, that the French were especially skilled in organization. 'They

Skill in organization.

Supposed to belong to certain races.

CHAP. XI.

manage these things much better in France,' was a common phrase with us. But when the day of trial came, this phrase did not appear to be founded on fact. We are now, perhaps, inclined to believe, that the Germans are the great masters of this art. I maintain, however, that skill in organization does not belong especially to any race; and that, when any nation, at a crisis of its fortunes, manifests great organizing skill, it is in consequence of individuals, blessed with the possession of such skill, being brought into positions of great power and sway. It would probably be as unwise to conclude, that any race of men will of necessity produce great poets as that it will produce skilful organizers.

Supposition erroneous.

For, consider what a rare combination of qualities must exist in any person who is to show forth great skill in organization! He must have the imaginative faculty developed in equal proportion with the practical faculty. He has, at the same time, to be apprehensive and courageous; fond of details and keen in discerning principles; a subtle observer of his fellow-men, who withal does not permit

Qualities of a great organizer.

his subtlety of observation to lead him away from the sure conclusion, that men chiefly act upon the most common-place and ordinary motives. He must look far forward, and must be thoroughly aware, that men are very trying and provoking beings; and that, in any long course of action which he may design for them, they will be sure to do something which it was intended they should not do, or to omit doing something which it was intended they should do. Again, and this is perhaps the rarest combination of all, he who has to become a skilful organizer, must be familiar with the state of facts he has to work upon, and yet keep himself free from that dangerous inadvertence, and that easy contentment with the customary mode of doing things, both of which evils naturally belong to this familiarity.

Their combination most rare.

This combination of qualities will not be found common in any race of mankind, and can only be looked for, in any high degree, in certain gifted individuals.

How rare these individuals are, may be inferred from the fact that defects in orga-

CHAP. XI.

nization are equally to be discerned in the management of men's pleasures, as in the conduct of their business. This is a most important fact to notice. If, on the contrary, it were to be seen that men were clever in making arrangements for their pleasures—in organizing these well—and yet, at the same time, their national affairs were observed to be ill-organized, we might then conclude, that organizing skill was plentiful, but that, somehow or other, the government failed to attract that skill to itself.

Its want seen in places of entertainment.

But this is not the case, I believe, in any country, and certainly not in our own country. Take, for instance, a very familiar example; and such a statement as I have made above may most convincingly be illustrated by some familiar example: observe what utter want of organization is shown in the dispersion of any large number of persons, after an entertainment of any kind. And yet I presume to think that to a person of organizing skill many modes occur at once by which this dispersion might be rendered most facile. If I am right in this assertion, it shows how

rare are those persons who can claim to possess organizing skill—or how rarely they come to the front.

And in railway traffic.

A similar remark may be made, as regards the conduct of railway business. I imagine it would astonish the world, if it could see how a master of organization would deal with the conduct of railway business, at some complicated railway station, where now all is hurry, doubt, confusion, and bewilderment.

Now, the people who direct railway business, are mostly very clever men; far above the average of mankind in cleverness, and probably in organizing skill; but they have not had the apprehensive foresight which discerns future difficulties and provides against them, or they have become too familiar with the present state of things to appreciate what there is in it that requires alteration.

My object, as far as I have hitherto gone in this chapter, has been to indicate how few and far between are the men who are skilled in organization. In a former work,[1] treating of this subject solely, I maintained that skill

[1] Essay on Organization.

CHAP. XI.

in organization is a thing which might be taught. Further consideration has led me to believe, that this assertion was not well founded; and at any rate, if accepted at all, it must be accepted with considerable limits, and modifications. For how are you to teach a man to be apprehensive and bold? This happy combination of opposing qualities is, I conceive, hereditary; and the boy who does not manifest it in the playground will seldom, I conjecture, be found to have it, as a man, in his converse with the world.

Organizing skill, not teachable.

I now proceed to the main drift of this chapter on organization. I would not have it thought that my previous remarks are solely of a discouraging nature. Hitherto I have chiefly had in my mind that high degree of organizing power which is required for the conduct of the greatest affairs. A similar power, in a lower degree, is shown to some extent in every well-managed household; and in every branch of public and private business which is tolerably well managed. In fact, without this power being exercised extensively in its lower degrees, the world could not get on at all, and

Its great importance.

CHAP. XI.

we should relapse into barbarism. Women often possess the talent of organization in a considerable degree, and, whenever they do possess it, their households, their entertainments, and their control of expenditure, show at once in the most marked manner that they do possess this talent.

If the foregoing views respecting organization are just, and if they can be applied at all, it is to the conduct of government that they are most applicable. For if organizing skill is needed anywhere, it is in those great national affairs in which, if errors are made, the mere money loss may amount to millions, and the ruin, or at least the degradation, of a nation may ensue. In the conduct of a nation's affairs, men of organizing power should be sought for with the keenest avidity, and be retained at almost any price. They are not to be discovered by any mode of previous examination. Indeed that very docility, and that readiness to accept whatever is taught them for a purpose—the purpose, namely, of success in competition—are qualities which tend to smother and deface, rather than to develop,

Organizing skill most wanted in government.

CHAP. XI.

organizing power. Strange to say, it is often a somewhat indolent and thoughtful man who has much of this power, but who remains very deficient in the mere acquisition of knowledge of any kind.

Another point, to be carefully considered with reference to this matter, is, that there are no two things more entirely dissociated than the power of argumentation and the power of arranging with forethought, and manifesting skill in organization. The man, who can see what ought to be done, and lay down a plan for doing it, is often totally unable to argue about that which he can design most skilfully. In these days, our principal rewards are given to the men of arguing powers, who may be absolutely inept in administrative power.

Powers of argumentation and organization.

Lastly, if by any means a man of organizing power is attached to any branch of the Executive, care should be taken, by his superiors, not to allow him to be ground down in the mill of routine; lest even he, too, should be subdued by over-much familiarity with the subjects he has to manipulate, and should thereby lose the power of discerning

Routine injurious to organizing powers.

CHAP. XI.

in what way the current treatment of matters, in his Department, requires to be entirely altered or amended.

I must add, that I cannot lay down any rule, nor do I believe anybody else can, for the discovery of men possessed with a singular aptitude for organization. All I can say is, that those who are placed in the highest positions, and who, therefore, have large opportunity for observing the work of other men, should be always on the alert to discover, and to attach to themselves and to their government, those men whom they have reason to believe possess this aptitude for organization. Statesmen must not be deceived by the manifestation of large powers of criticism, in those whom they are inclined to consider as men of organizing talent. Criticism, as well as argumentation, has but little, if anything, to do with this organizing talent.

Statesmen should look out for men of organizing skill.

The man, who possesses it, is nearly sure to manifest it in some practical way; and if that way is observed by some person in power, that person may fairly infer, that if he can attach this worker and thinker (not criticiser,

CHAP. XI.

not talker) to the public service, he has so far fulfilled one of the chief functions of a statesman.

In great crises you constantly hear such words as these: 'Oh, that there were a man! What a difference one great man would make!' But it is forgotten that there must be the wise men to choose the man; for the greatest man finds a difficulty in choosing himself and putting himself forward.

CHAPTER XII.

ON FORESIGHT IN GOVERNMENT.

WOULD that there were more of this valuable quality shown in every government that governs, or pretends to govern, throughout the world. Never was this quality more needed than in an age justly called an age of transition—when there is immense diversity of opinion; when the world of thought is more than ever divided into sects; and when that most dangerous form of thought, which is best described by the French word *doctrinaire*, is remarkably prevalent.

Foresight much needed in government.

As it is, even the bystander most favourable to the governments which exist, must admit, however reluctantly, that the action of government chiefly consists in a series of surprises.

Yet very rare.

All observant people must agree in recognising this evil, which it will be desirable to

CHAP. XII.

examine minutely, in order to discover the causes, and, if possible, suggest some remedy.

A cause for this in England.

One of the main causes why government, even in this country, which justly claims to be the best governed country in the world, is still a government that acts in a faltering, hap-hazard, and uncertain manner, is the following:—

Ministers absorbed by daily work.

The persons, who are chiefly entrusted with carrying on the government, are so much immersed in the difficulties of the present hour—their work from day to day so fully occupies them (especially in this age of unlimited correspondence)—that they have neither the leisure, nor the heart, nor the spare intellectual energy, to devote to a large consideration for the future. This work, therefore, is done mainly by writers, unconnected with government. Now, with all their merits, we cannot expect these writers to be eminently practical. The views and wishes, which they put forward, often lack that consideration of the circumstances surrounding them, that knowledge of practical difficulties, and that experience of men, which

Their critics often unpractical.

are only gained by converse with active life.

What is wanted, in every State, is a body of philosophic—no, I am afraid of that word —of thoughtful statesmen; who, though partaking of some of the active duties of statesmen, should not be overweighted by their having too much of the conduct of ordinary business imposed upon them.

Need for ministers less overworked.

I know that this proposal is a very difficult one to realise in action. But, then, the whole matter we are discussing—namely, the providing foresight for government—is confessedly a very difficult one, and we cannot expect the remedy to be facile. Moreover, such a remedy as is proposed, is rather contrary to what is called the spirit of the age. A single illustration will show what I mean. There are certain offices, in the Cabinet of Great Britain, to which no onerous duties are attached, and indeed, to speak frankly, scarcely any duties at all. The present outcry is, 'Let those offices be abolished, or let onerous duties be attached to them.' In a word, let every man engaged in the highest

Some sinecure offices useful.

CHAP. XII.

branches of statesmanship, be oppressed by the severe and urgent routine of office, which already prevents so many of the greatest men from being able to give due foresight to the affairs of the future. Well, be it so; only remember, that if the miller and his men are always employed in grinding for the necessities of the day, and there is no one left, a little outside, to watch the course of the stream, it may fail some day when it is most wanted; or it may come down in one tumultuous overflow, sweeping away the mill, the miller and his men, broadening, as it goes, into one vast torrent of destruction.

Their abolition unwise.

Not, however, that I would confine the acquisition of this foresight merely to statesmen and philosophers. It is comparatively but little service to the world, that a Chesterfield, or a Burke, should foresee the political evils coming upon a generation of unobservant men. We must, in order to insure wise government for the future, contrive that considerable numbers of persons should try to gain some foresight in political affairs.

Foresight not to be confined to statesmen and philosophers.

It may seem a pedantic thing to say, but I

CHAP. XII.

am persuaded, that to effect this great good, much reference must be made to history. There are certain principles, as to the probable conduct of men, and as to the results of measures, which can only be evolved from some study of those historical events, which have an application to our own times. If I were asked, what would be the most fruitful subject for study that could be devised for giving foresight in political action, it is the history of the Girondins. There never, perhaps, was an instance in the world, in which so many good men, having really great designs for the welfare of mankind, were so utterly deluded and deceived. The same error, which misled these good men, stands eternally in the way of improvement, and has to be most carefully guarded against. That error was the supposition that they (the Girondins) could place the limits of movement, at that precise line of demarcation which seemed to them to be the wisest and the best. The man who partakes this fatal error of the Girondins forgets, as they did, that there is a fierce crowd behind him, who do not limit themselves to his

The high use of history.

The Girondins.

CHAP. XII.

views and are not contented with his objects, but are rushing down the hill to achieve their own—whom he can never hope to stay till they get to the bottom of that perilous descent.

Not the less danger is there, from want of foresight, in a totally different direction. The history of the Girondins is certainly a most fruitful subject for the contemplation of politicians. A kindred subject, namely, the

Louis XV.

conduct of Louis XV. and his Ministers, is equally fruitful.

I fear that the contemplative bystander would find much to blame, on account of want of foresight, even in our own time. It must, however, be acknowledged, that much of the security and good order that we possess, is the result of a foresight which generally comes rather late in Great Britain, but which frequently does come at last, and is the salvation of us politically, as a State. That our people have, at this moment, so few purely political grievances, is an inestimable blessing. What we have to consider as the main objects for foresight in government, are

Benefits resulting to Great Britain from foresight.

the questions of social difficulty which at present threaten us, and which are looming large in the distance.

There is also another class of subjects which especially call for the exercise of foresight on the part of government. It relates to panics of all kinds, sudden and ill-considered resolves of all kinds, which most nations are seldom free from, for any length of time. For example, a nation has a sudden fit of severe economy, or, on the other hand, of recklessness in matters of expense. Or it has a wild panic as regards invasion; or, on the other hand, it indulges in a fit of sublime, but most unwarrantable confidence, as regards the maintenance of peace, and the needlessness of warlike preparation. All these fits and humours of a nation require great foresight on the part of statesmen, to know how to bear with them; to prevent their doing mischief; and to make use of them for some good purpose, which, at other times and seasons, might not be so easily effected.

Foresight in regard to panics.

I cannot better conclude this chapter, than by giving a very remarkable quotation from

CHAP. XII.

Montesquieu, or rather from Gravina, whom Montesquieu quotes, whereby it may be seen what is the true definition of a State, as a being which combines in itself the forces of all the individuals who compose it. That those forces should be well directed for the benefit of the individuals, and should be well combined for the common welfare of the State, is the principal subject-matter for foresight in this Country, especially considering that the social questions before alluded to are those which now concern us most :—

True definition of a State.

'Outre le droit des gens, qui regarde toutes les sociétés, il y a un droit politique pour chacune. Une société ne sauroit subsister sans un gouvernement. "La réunion de toutes les forces particulières," dit très-bien Gravina, "forme ce qu'on appelle l'État politique.'"[1]

[1] *L'Esprit des Lois*, par Montesquieu, liv. i. chap. iii.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EDUCATION OF A STATESMAN.

WE have now to concern ourselves with the education of the governors, not of the governed, which education ought obviously to be of a somewhat special character.

Special education of a statesman.

An admirable work, before referred to, has been written on the training and conduct of statesmen by Sir Henry Taylor. It is called 'The Statesman.' This work of mine will not allow of my dealing elaborately with the subject, as Sir Henry Taylor has done. I shall attempt only to set down those points which have particularly engaged my thoughts with regard to the education of statesmen.

In all times, but especially in these times, it is needful for a statesman to have a great mastery of details. To use an expression I have used elsewhere, he should have 'an

Mastery of details needful.

CHAP. XIII.

Love of detail.

almost ignominious love of details.' The questions that come before him partake of the complication which must exist in highly-civilized communities. These questions will be cumbered with details; and a statesman, at any rate if he is acting under a constitutional government, will not carry to a prosperous issue any large measure by the aid of a few great principles, unless he have the knowledge, and the skill, which will enable him to put the details into their right places, and to adapt them to these principles. If we consider the eminent statesmen of recent times we shall find that, with very few exceptions, they have been men who, to use a phrase of Talleyrand's, are 'avid of facts.' They would have been good men of business in any department of life.

Eminent statesmen 'avid of facts.'

Now, how are this avidity for facts, and this skill in selecting and arranging them, to be acquired? I would not be so presumptuous as to attempt to lay down, authoritatively, any special rules for acquiring these necessary aids to statesmanship. This is a matter which must mainly be left to the dis-

CHAP. XIII.

cretion of those persons who are training youths likely to be concerned in statesmanship. One youth will, by the peculiar bent of his mind, indicate to his instructor one way of attaining this desirable object; another youth will indicate another. All that can be said to an instructor is, 'Whenever you see an opportunity of making a youth follow any particular study, which involves dealing with large masses of facts, encourage him in it, and keep him to it.'

Rules to be left to the instructor.

One thing I must remark, and herein my opinion entirely coincides with that of Sir Henry Taylor, that the way to make a student, who is to become a statesman, read history, is, to confine his attention to a particular period, and make him know that in its minutest detail, demanding from him, not essays, but elaborate statements of facts. It is astonishing what strength and minuteness of observation, and what power of comparing and marshalling significant facts, may be given to an intelligent youth, by severely exercising his mind in this peculiar way.

How statesmen should study history.

The next branch of education to be culti-

Power of expression.

CHAP. XIII.

vated is expression. This is one of the principal arts of life, and is most needful for any man who would influence his fellow-men. It is essentially the art of artists whose excellence is mainly to be seen in their powers of expression, which include that of representation. It is an art which, if not to be acquired by one who has no natural gifts in that direction, may, at any rate, be greatly enlarged and furthered in anyone who has the smallest natural faculty for it. As a nation we do not excel in the power of expression, and therefore it is peculiarly valuable amongst us. Of necessity, skill in expression includes logic and method. It may be well taught at home in our earliest years; and it is an art, in which an observant man may go on improving to the end of his life.

An art to be cultivated.

Includes logic and method.

Especially requisite for a statesman.

For a statesman, nothing is more requisite than that he should be able to narrate accurately, to explain succinctly, to answer clearly and logically, and, in short, to deliver all that he knows, or has to say, with the greatest force, the least apparent effort, and the least irrelevancy. This appears to be a large de-

mand to make upon any man; but it is not beyond the scope of teaching. CHAP. XIII.

Its want obvious to all.

It is surprising what keenness of observation even an unlearned bystander has of defects in expression. He perceives where the tale is ill told, or the statement insufficiently made; he detects redundancies of phrase, needless parentheses, want of method in the narrative, and all that movement backwards and forwards—telling too much too soon, and too little too late; which result in making a story, or a statement, inconsequent, confused, and deficient in force and interest. He may be a good general critic, although, from want of practice, he would himself commit the faults which he detects and condemns. He may, therefore, instruct the young in amending these faults, if only he comments upon them. And anyone who is concerned in bringing up a statesman, can hardly do more service to his charge than by endeavouring to make him attend carefully to the just expression of whatever he has to express. This may at first sight appear likely to produce pedantry, and to make a young person

CHAP. XIII.

think less of what he has to say, than of how he should say it. But if any such pedantry is acquired, it soon wears off in the urgency of the real business of life; and the youth, well taught in this respect, becomes a man who, unconsciously, has the power of expressing what he thinks and feels, without having to think of the mode and manner of this expression.

Everyone should be taught to speak.

Of course a statesman, and indeed most other persons, should be taught how to speak. Respecting this accomplishment there are certain rules that have been ascertained to be imperative, if a man would command the attention of his audience. There is also something that practice alone can give. It is that a man should be able to think while he is in the act of speaking—while he is on his legs, and has a number of eager eyes looking up at him. He should be able to change the order of his speech; to dwell much upon that part of the subject as regards which he discovers that his audience requires enlightenment, or is ready with sympathy; and to withhold, or shorten that part of his prearranged discourse

Art of speaking.

which he finds it is needless, or, perhaps, offensive, to dilate upon. In short, he should be able to use his mind in a dual capacity, speaking what he is determined to say, and at the same time determining what he will say next.

Debating societies.

This accomplishment cannot be perfected without practice; and though debating societies at schools and universities may appear to be mere play, they are not without great use in the training of statesmen.

Love of justice and truth.

I have not spoken of the higher matters which belong to the education of statesmen; of the love of justice and of truth; of the care for the well-being of their fellow-men; of the sense of the responsibility for power, which should be inculcated during youth. The chief part of this great work must be done by their mothers, or, at any rate, by those who are nearest to them in relationship, or who come into the closest contact with them. It is seldom that a character is developed into greatness, unless a great example has been furnished to it by those who have had the care of its early training.

Great example fosters greatness.

I have said how needful it is to give the

CHAP. XIII.

nascent statesman a habit of dealing with details, and of expressing well whatever he has to express. But there is a branch of his education which must never be neglected; it is to insert into his mind some interest in all that is going on around him. Other men may not be injured by narrowness of mind — or I should rather say by narrowness of purpose — for narrowness of mind must be a great detriment to any man who is bounded by it. But, in so far as it may produce a certain fixedness of purpose, and concentration of effort in one direction, it may have some value in rendering its possessor successful in his particular calling, if that be one of a limited nature. Such, however, is not the calling of a statesman, which requires extended sympathies, varied knowledge, and a certain catholicity of thought. To the man whose business it is to rule, no knowledge — no information — can come amiss any more than to the poet or the man of letters. He has hereafter to be a keen observer of all that he may see, especially of all that has a human interest. This will hardly be the case

Extended sympathies needed

And should be cultivated.

CHAP. XIII.

unless, in youth, he is induced to take a keen interest in all the occupations and proceedings of those that surround him. Now this general interest in human affairs is a feeling which can be educed and enlarged by early training; and a skilful instructor, having to educate those who are likely to become statesmen, can insinuate, as it were, into the minds of his pupils somewhat of that large-minded and sympathetic interest in all that is going on around them, which will be so valuable to them in after life.

Interest in human affairs may be acquired.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EDUCATION OF A STATESMAN
continued.

CHAP. XIV.

THE education of a statesman should never end. This indeed may be said of any other man; but the maxim peculiarly applies to statesmen, who have continually to cultivate a very difficult branch of self-education, namely, that of educating themselves in the knowledge of what those whom they guide and govern are thinking, hoping, expecting, and wishing for. It is a strange thing to say, but statesmen are, for the most part, peculiarly unfortunate as regards the company they keep—unfortunate, I mean—with a view to gain this requisite knowledge respecting their own people. In reality their lives are much more isolated than would at first sight appear. They see a great deal of their colleagues, their private secretaries, and their official subordinates; and they occasionally have to

Education should never end.

Statesmen too much isolated.

CHAP. XIV.

meet large numbers of their fellow-citizens at public meetings. But all the knowledge they thus gain is stamped with an official character. There is a vast amount of other knowledge, respecting the thoughts and wishes of their fellow-countrymen, which these statesmen are peculiarly ill-placed for obtaining. It is true that they read the newspapers. There is, however, a large field of thought which is not to be found even in the newspapers. It is a common belief, often expressed very cynically, that the people of this and other countries are entirely guided by the public press, and that each man does but talk his favourite newspaper. This is a total delusion, as anybody may verify for himself, who will take the trouble to watch the conversation which takes place in public conveyances. There is hardly any man of ordinary intelligence, who will be bound down by what his newspaper says; and you may frequently observe, that a newspaper article is discussed in one of these public conveyances, and is subjected to very searching criticism, and very direct oppugnancy. In fact, as civiliza-

Their knowledge mostly official.

People not entirely guided by press.

As proved by conversation in public conveyances.

CHAP. XIV.

tion has advanced, the great mass of the world has become much more critical; and, at any rate, in what is called the Anglo-Saxon race, there is an immense amount of individuality of opinion. At the moment at which I am writing, the subject of army reform is prominently in the minds of my fellow-countrymen. I have listened to discussions on this subject in railway carriages, which it would have been very desirable for any statesman to hear.

Anglo-Saxon race very critical,

It is moreover to be recollected, that we and our American relations, are the people who indulge most in travelling; and we are too intelligent a people not to have made many shrewd observations upon the conduct of other nations, whom we have visited. Again, as regards ourselves, we have vast colonial possessions; and so extensive has been our employment in those colonies, and perhaps I should say, in those empires which are subject to us, that you will hardly find yourself in a company of eight or ten people, brought by chance together, in which there will not be one or more persons who can give you,

And much given to travel.

Advantages of his habit.

from his own personal experience, interesting facts relating to India, or to Australia, or to the West India islands.

More than ordinary information required.

Facts, such as these, statesmen ought to be able to get at and to verify. They want to know, or at least they ought to want to know, much more than the ordinary class of political facts.

Public meetings.

This knowledge is not to be acquired at public meetings. It is astonishing what men will assent to, in large assemblages of their fellow-men, when carried away by the excitement of the moment; and how erroneously their opinions may be represented, if deduced only from what takes place at public meetings. A statesman wants to know what are the real feelings of the people he guides and governs. This knowledge can only be obtained by much and intimate converse with the people: and if a statesman cannot obtain this for himself, (and indeed it is a very difficult matter for him, with his pressing occupations,) he should aim at doing so through other trustworthy persons.

Intimate converse with the people needed.

I doubt much whether the condition of

CHAP. XIV.

large numbers of the lower classes of this country is intimately known to many statesmen. Yet this, as all will admit, is a kind of knowledge that demands to be known by statesmen. There was a tax proposed, some time ago, which, however much it was ridiculed, had a great deal to recommend it. It was condemned mainly by the appearance, in the streets, of those persons who were likely to be injured by the imposition of this tax. Now when people blame and ridicule the proposer of this tax, may I ask them, and especially the statesmen among them, whether they had any adequate idea of the condition of those miserable persons who were to be the first to bear the injury to employment that would, or might be, created by the imposition of that tax?

Condition of lower classes little known.

I would carefully guard myself from being supposed to maintain, that a statesman should look upon himself as bound to carry out the wishes of the people, when he has ascertained them. In general it will be found, that with the utmost research he will only be able to ascertain the views and wishes of certain

Popular ideas not always to be carried out.

sections of the people. He has also to consider imperial interests; and it may be his duty, as possessing a wider survey, to oppose the wishes not only of large classes of his fellow-countrymen, but even of the whole Country at large.

Imperial interests being paramount.

Still, it is of the utmost advantage for a statesman to make himself thoroughly master of the views and wishes of any one class. As I have been desirous, throughout this work, of giving individual examples, with regard to the general propositions which I may lay down, I will give an instance in point.

Knowledge of class views.

Many years ago, it was determined, by the government of the day, to bring in a measure to amend and consolidate all the Acts relating to an important branch of taxation. The Minister, who was to have charge of the measure, was well aware that he had very little personal experience of the troubles, vexations, and inequalities caused by the incidence of this branch of taxation. He took occasion to declare, in the most public manner, that he wished for information on

A case in point.

CHAP. XIV.

the subject; and, on the part of the Government, he invited communications by letter, from all persons in the kingdom, who had peculiar knowledge or experience of this much-entangled matter. He was one of those men who have the good sense to know that, in such a position as his, he could not do everything for himself, but must make great use of his subordinates. He appointed one person, a secretary in his Department, to deal with the whole of this correspondence, desiring the secretary to furnish him with a complete report of the whole matter.

Result.

The letters poured in by hundreds. At first the mass was bewildering; but gradually, after abstracting and studying a great number of these communications, (which sometimes, by the way, required further correspondence and interviews,) the secretary was enabled to lay before his chief such a digest, as showed where needless pressure and inconvenience were occasioned by that branch of taxation, as it was then imposed or collected; also to show where it could be made most fruitful, with the least inconvenience and irritation to

the public; and, in short, to get at the ruling principles of the whole matter.

Working of Act.

A Bill was framed accordingly, which was most successful, and which endured in full force for many years without any complaints against its manifold prohibitions. By this instance I very much desire to show, by reference to a transaction of which I had personal knowledge, how much advantage is to be gained by large communication with the public in the preparation of any measure which greatly affects their interests.

Public advantage.

Mode of dealing with things

It is also an instance of how a statesman should execute certain kinds of work. There is no point in which the continuous education of a grown-up statesman—an education he must provide for himself—is more surely manifested, than in the way in which, as he grows older and wiser, he superintends rather than works out matters in detail; judges and controls, rather than elaborates; and, in short, learns to make the amplest use of his subordinates.

as a statesman grows experienced.

A statesman, who is admitted by all parties to have been one of the best administrators

CHAP. XIV.

of a great Department whom this country has ever possessed, told me, that days, and even weeks, sometimes passed without his ever writing a line himself. He was, nevertheless, one of the most industrious of men; and he added: 'I am all day long engaged in seeing what other people are doing and can do.' Now that man had gone far to attain, in this respect, the self-education, which I would insist upon as pre-eminently requisite for a statesman. One of the great arts of all persons placed in authority is, to multiply themselves, as it were, by a judicious and trustful employment of other men's intelligence and abilities.

A minister's experience.

Lastly, in reference to the subject of this chapter, it may not be amiss to suggest to statesmen, that, of all people in the world, they are those who will find their greatest reward in doing their work thoroughly. To do that work thoroughly, it is especially requisite that they should not undertake too much. It may be a commonplace remark to make; but observe wherein lies the success of the most successful men in every condition of

Work should be thorough, and judiciously limited.

CHAP. XIV.

life. It results more from the limitation of their efforts, than from almost anything else. The truth of this maxim is to be observed in the Arts, in Commerce, in Literature, in Science; and it is not less true in statesmanship. To follow up this maxim requires great courage; but it is a courage that meets with almost instantaneous reward. Let a statesman only have the courage to say, 'I will not deal with this proposed measure now. The world is full of grievances. They must, however, be dealt with one by one; and no semblance of pretentious statesmanship shall make me depart from my resolve to deal with these grievances individually, but forcibly, rather than to give an ineffective acknowledgment, by some imperfect measures, of all the grievances which may be brought before me.'

The maxim general.

Grievances to be dealt with singly.

The multiplicity of the measures which, in weak moments, a statesman has consented to introduce, has often been the cause which has ruined his reputation as a statesman.

CHAPTER XV.

ON IMPROVEMENT, IN CONTRAST WITH REFORM.

CHAP. XV.

IT is a sad thing to say, but no less true than sad, that one can seldom succeed, as an author, in putting forward in the strongest and best manner that which one cares for most. When the great actor produces the most impression upon his audience, it is not because, at the moment, he has the most sympathy with his part. The intensity of feeling has, perhaps, long gone by; and what moves them most is the result of high art, that has, to some extent, dissociated itself from the original feeling which was not adequately expressed at the time when it was first and most deeply felt. An author has no such chance of improving, by repetition, his expression of what he feels; and often that which he is most deeply anxious to impress

upon his readers, he fails in expressing, from his profound care for the subject. CHAP. XV.

I feel this in entering upon the consideration of the subject of the present chapter; for I greatly fear that I may not be able to convey adequately to the reader my sense of its high importance.

Political ambition an evil.

One of the great evils attendant upon political life is, that it is connected so closely with ambition, and with the love of fame. And yet in politics some of the most useful, if not the greatest achievements which remain to be accomplished, will not gratify ambition, nor ensure fame. These achievements lie in the way of improvement. How rarely men are contented with mere improvement in political affairs may be inferred from the names which political parties have received, or have assumed. We hear of Whigs, Tories, Conservatives, Reformers, and Destructives. In America, too, the names for political parties, however strange and varied, are never such as show that the partisans condescend to limit themselves to anything so humble as mere improvement. The word Reformer approaches

Party names.

CHAP. XV.

most nearly to that of Improver, but yet is essentially different, as it implies reconstruction. Whereas, to carry out the greatest improvement, there is frequently not the slightest necessity to change the form of things.

Large scope for improvers.

It would, perhaps, surprise the world to find how much could be done, and done with comparative ease, in the way of improvement, which is now left to be done in the way of reform. There are, for instance, scores of Acts of Parliament now inoperative, or only partially operative, that might be rendered largely effectual by slight alterations and extensions. For example, an Act has been passed providing some remedy for some evil in a town, probably of a sanitary kind. As population has become more dense in the suburbs of that town, the evil in question has extended to them, and the remedy ought also to be extended. Unfortunately, however, no one thinks it worth his while to attack, by means of legislation, this new evil. There is neither name nor fame to be gained by such a humble, though most useful, undertaking. It is merely making the most, and

the best, of another man's previous work; and each man proposes to himself to do something larger and better than that, if he have the capability of doing anything.

Cause of misplaced ambition.

The principal cause of this misplaced ambition is, that in all our schemes of action, we take such delight in beginning anew—in imagining for ourselves a *tabula rasa* in any branch of human affairs that we wish to meddle with; and we think, that it will be so pleasant to inscribe, as it were, upon blank leaves whatever we desire to indite. The misfortune, however, is, that there remains hardly anything in human life which can be begun again, in this trenchant manner. As an example, it may be noticed that several socialistic schemes, for equalising conditions, would require a total demolition of most of the buildings which are at present on the earth. Now these buildings represent the work of ages; and the humble improver does not by any means desire to demolish them.

To convince a statesman of what good might be done by the improvement of that

CHAP. XV.

which already exists, I have sometimes thought that if one could persuade him to take a walk with one in London, and its suburbs, or in any other thickly populated town, what opportunities one might show him for improvement of the kind that I mean, both in legislation and in administrative action.

Need of improvement in London.

There are huge factories rising up on the banks of rivers, the refuse of which will, for certain, whether openly or furtively, be shot down into the stream, and will thereby inevitably cause great mischief to all those who dwell on its banks and have to drink of its waters. This statesman would see portions of land about to be occupied by mean and unhealthy dwellings, which land ought to be under the control of the government for the public good. He would see volumes of smoke issuing from factories, and begriming great public buildings for which he has consented that the nation should pay large sums of money; and it might be suggested to him, that this smoke, though one of the greatest evils of modern civilization, is at the same time one of the most easily preventible. One

might then take him into the most densely populated parts of the town; and show him how absolutely abominable are all the primary arrangements for habitation, which have to be endured by thousands, and tens of thousands, of his poorer fellow-countrymen. The remedies for these evils need not be sought for in forms of legislation, which will encounter much opposition by evoking political passions or prejudices. They lie within the placid realm of the improver.

Remedies within reach of all.

I do not undervalue the great political measures which remove political disabilities, and are framed with a view to making large masses of our fellow-countrymen more contented with imperial rule. But it is improvement in those minor matters before enumerated, which will make life more comely, and which will create good citizens as well as good men.

Improvement very desirable.

There are, at this moment, vast schemes for change and reform, brought forward by men who have, as yet, but little political standing or political weight in the State. Without undervaluing the labours of these men, or

Schemes brought forward.

CHAP. XV.

depreciating the objects they have in view, one can hardly doubt, that practised statesmen look upon these outsiders somewhat as quacks, while they consider themselves to be the regular practitioners. But let statesmen take this fact to heart; that it is only from their failures, that these men, whom perhaps they affect to despise, derive their chief influence; and I contend that these failures are mainly to be attributed to the negligence of statesmen, in improving the condition of the poorer classes by measures, not of great political, but of immense social urgency.

Wherein lies the strength of democratic agitation.

The statesmen of almost every Country might afford to despise the efforts of the most democratic agitators, if the welfare of the common people, in what are regarded as comparatively minor matters, had been sufficiently attended to. That man is seldom inclined to be clamorously destructive, who has a comfortable home, and who finds that the legislation of his country is directed, not merely to the redress of political grievances,

but concerns itself with all that can free his condition from whatever is ignoble, unhealthy, and unbecoming.

If these minor improvements, when tried, had been found to fail—if experience had proved that men whose homes had been made more comfortable, and whose well-being had been looked after in every way by their superiors, had still continued to be agitators, or the prey of agitators—we might conclude that that was not the way to satisfy mankind. But the experiment has been tried and proved to be successful. Wherever, and whenever a great manufacturer, or other large employer of labour, has had somewhat of the spirit of the true statesman in him, and has striven to create a happy and contented population in the neighbourhood of his works, he has uniformly, as far as my knowledge goes, succeeded in doing so. Now, if statesmen would place a similar object in view, for the whole of the labouring population, they also might meet with similar success. And the means by which they might attain that

Wise benevolence of some employers.

CHAP. XV.

success lie rather in the way of improving the legislation that has already been begun with that view, than in bringing forward great measures of political or social change.

I am by no means anxious to contend that there are not many subjects for political action, which need the reformer in preference to the improver. But I maintain, that an enormous field of mere improvement lies before those who would have the modesty to limit their political action to improvement. That 'last infirmity of noble minds,' the desire for fame, which, however, I would characterise as the first infirmity of minds ignoble as well as noble, has, in no branch of human life, effected more mischief than in politics. I have scarcely a hope of increasing the number of improvers; but I think that they might be consoled for the want of fame attendant upon their labours, by their fully appreciating what an extensive sphere of usefulness lies before them.

Immense field for the improver.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WANT OF TIME FOR STATESMANSHIP.

THIS want of time is one of the most serious evils affecting the government of this country; an evil which is steadily increasing. No sooner does a man attain to any eminence, in whatever calling it may be, than he is forthwith molested by constant demands upon the time, which should be reserved to maintain that eminence, and to make it useful to the world. It must be noted too, that these demands are made mostly in matters which are extraneous to the calling, in which the unfortunate man has arrived at distinction.

Time of ministers needlessly encroached upon;

It would be well, if it were only his time which is thus unreasonably encroached upon. But we are often deluded by vague ideas about that word time. It is energy which is thus lowered and absorbed. People forget, that the energy of their fellow-men is a

and their energies weakened,

CHAP. XVI.

limited quantity, and that a certain amount of energy is exhausted, even by that which may appear to be but a small demand upon time.

by small matters intruded upon them.

Moreover, and this is a most important consideration, when frequent demands are made upon the time of any great man, in regard to small matters, which ought never to have been brought before him at all, he is apt to be satisfied with the exertions which he has made in reference to these small matters, and to put aside those things, which require severe and continuous thought.

Instance in point.

I shall here refer to a fact which, I believe, I have mentioned elsewhere; but which may serve to convey, to any reader who has not much experience of official life, what pressure is put, in this respect, upon the foremost statesmen of the day. Going into the office of one of these statesmen, early one morning, I found his private secretary packing up the letters, that had arrived for the Minister by that morning's post. This Minister, whose enforced absence from official life we have now to deplore, was then failing in health, and had gone, for a day or two, into the

country, to obtain some rest. I remarked to the secretary, that it was a large batch of letters. 'Yes,' he replied, 'I had the curiosity to count them; there are a hundred and eight. These are only the private letters that have arrived this morning. The official letters are first opened, and seen by us in the office. Then there will be another batch of private, as well as of public letters, to be forwarded in the afternoon.' CHAP. XVI. Private letters of one day.

Now, it is very well to say that a large proportion of these letters were, doubtless, of a comparatively insignificant character; and that they might have been disposed of in a few words of direction, and without much expenditure of thought. But the number tells. No man deals, even in the most perfunctory manner, with a hundred and eight letters, without undergoing considerable exertion of mind. There are sure to be, amongst them, letters from colleagues, from subordinates, from political or personal friends, which will require careful answering. Their ill-effect.

I have illustrated above only one branch of the subject. If the Minister had been in

CHAP. XVI.

town, there would have been a constant succession of visitors, perhaps of deputations requiring interviews; and, considering the responsible position of a Minister, each of these interviews would oblige him to be upon his guard, and would require a certain tension of the mind. Statesmen are, for the most part, hardened to labour, before they rise to any eminence, otherwise their health would almost certainly break down at an early period after their taking high office.

Statesmen hardened to labour.

It is not, however, their health that I am now considering, but their time and their energy. I have forborne dwelling upon the large amount of time, and, occasionally, of energy which is consumed, often very fruitlessly, in the attendance of Ministers in Parliament.

Ministers in Parliament.

After this partial insight into a Minister's daily life, is it to be wondered at, if, except in rare instances, he does not give that minute, continuous and patient consideration to the preparation of great measures, which they imperatively require?

But this is not the whole of the evil. There

CHAP. XVI.

is great danger, that a man so occupied, will not be able to give the requisite attention to the current work of his Office. And, after all, careful administration is a duty incumbent on a Minister, of quite as important a nature as judicious legislation.

Administration as important as legislation.

It is very desirable, that men, holding the highest offices in the State, should, whatever other labours they may undertake, reserve sufficient time for the duties of administration. The Office should not be sacrificed, as it were, to Parliament: still less to any other claims which may be made upon the Minister's time and attention.

Departments not to be sacrificed to Parliament.

I believe, that if the chief permanent officers of the British Government were called together, and were asked, what it is they most desire, they would say, even in preference to their official salaries being raised, that what they most wish is, that more time should be given to them by their Parliamentary chiefs. No amount of ability, not even of that special ability which consists in rapid seizing of the points of a case, makes up for this deficiency of time. For my own

More time needed for office work.

CHAP. XVI.

part, I have often said that, in submitting a difficult matter for decision, I would rather have twenty minutes with a man, not, perhaps, of the highest ability, than ten minutes only with a man of supreme ability.

Time needed to master facts,

This view may be illustrated by what happens when any suit is brought into Court. We are often told, and justly, that we, who have not been present in Court, cannot thoroughly judge of the case. There is something of the same kind in all cases, whether legal or official. It will not always do to present an abstract of a document. Often it should be read through, by the man who has to give a final decision upon the case to which it refers. Few people, especially in an age in which there is a great aversion to responsibility, convey *directly* their full thought upon any great matter they write about; but something, if not much, is left to be inferred. And the right inference can only be drawn, by very careful attention to the wording of the document itself.

Before concluding this part of the subject, I must observe, as I believe I have previously

observed, that in the best permanent officials, there is always a great desire to be in perfect accord with their chiefs. These permanent officers are well aware that their duty is merely to carry out exactly the views and wishes of those chiefs; and, when they fail to do so, it is, in nine instances out of ten, from having imperfectly gathered, (by reason of the shortness of the interview,) the views of their superiors, and not from indulging in any crotchets of their own.

and to instruct subordinates thoroughly.

We have seen something of the nature of a Minister's work during the Session, and while he is administering his Department; but his holidays are often very joyless, certainly very peaceless, when compared with those of other men. The British people keep their chief statesmen well in public view, at all times. And, unless a Minister quits the country, which he is seldom able to do, his vacation is frequently as full of work, as other men's busiest time.

A minister's holidays often very joyless.

It is always an ungrateful task to comment upon an evil, without suggesting any reme-

Remedies proposed.

CHAP. XVI.

dies for it. In this matter I have three remedies to propose.

The first, and greatest, is one which can only succeed if it meet with a just appreciation on the part of the public, to whose considerateness I would appeal.

It is, that people in general should exercise great forbearance, as regards taking up the time of Ministers, by communications which need not be addressed to them. I am sure, if it were only from pity, the public would be more careful than they are in this matter, could they but know how constant and severe is the necessary pressure upon the time and attention of those men who have to conduct the affairs of this great and growing Empire.

Unnecessary communications.

The second remedy which I propose, can only be made effectual, if it is fully appreciated, and generously acted up to, by Members of Parliament.

It is, that, as regards Parliamentary work, there should be more consideration for Ministers, than there is at present. The number of questions asked in Parliament, in the present day, is most unreasonable. A man

Number of questions asked in Parliament.

whose experience of Parliamentary proceedings is of very long standing, was asked, in my presence, whether Pitt was careful and elaborate in answering questions in the House of Commons. 'Yes,' was the reply, 'he was; but then, you know, questions in Parliament were rare things; never more than three or four at a sitting.'

There are other matters, also, in which a Minister's time and attention might be spared. In the conduct of a Bill of many clauses through Committee, there is often great waste of a Minister's time, by the attempt, on the part of persons who have not really studied the Bill, to introduce amendments and interpolations, which go far to destroy the Bill as a whole. This practice calls upon the Minister to exercise the utmost dexterity, to prevent his Bill from becoming an inconsistent mass of crude legislation.

Conduct of a Bill in Parliament.

My third remedy is purely of an official character, and can be applied by Ministers themselves, if they should coincide with me in thinking, that it is worth while to take some pains in doing so.

CHAP. XVI.

It is to provide, in every Department, some person, or persons, who shall not be absorbed by the current business of the Department—who should not be concerned so much with what is being done, as with what should be done, and with what should be provided for in the future. This is the person with whom the Minister should have much converse during that period of time which is facetiously called his holidays. This third remedy is, to a certain extent, a new proposal. But it must be remembered, that as the nation rapidly increases in numbers, and as civilization advances, more and more subjects of interest, requiring either government interference or government abstinence, have to be considered; and that our chief public servants have need of every aid that can be given them, to meet the ever-increasing demand upon their time and upon their energies.

CHAPTER XVII.

GOVERNMENT AND THE PRESS.

IT would be ridiculous to suppose, that a free press will not have great power in whatever country it may exist, or under whatever government. This power will be due, not only to the skill which the press may show in advocacy, but also to the fact, that it has, in general, the opportunity of commencing the discussion of great political affairs, thereby anticipating the views and intentions of the Government and the Opposition, and, in short, of gaining the public ear in the first instance. If any part of the press enters into close alliance with any great political party, that part of the press loses much of its influence; for the public desires the press to represent its views and wishes, and does not delight in manifest advocacy on behalf of political parties.

Power of the Press.

Alliance with political parties.

CHAP. XVII.

Such a power, as that of the press, cannot be ignored; at least it would be senseless on the part of any government to ignore it.

Relations between press and government.

Then comes the question, as to what should be the relations between the press and government. Before all things, these relations should not be slavish on either side. They should, if possible, be friendly; and, at any rate, should be just. By 'just,' I mean, that communications from government, upon matters respecting which the public may fairly claim early information, should be imparted simultaneously to all the principal organs of the press.

Motives sometimes to be communicated to the press.

It would, also, be very desirable, I think, that not merely information, but the motives for action on the part of government, should, on some occasions, be communicated to the leading newspapers. This may, at first sight, appear to be an undignified mode of proceeding, but it would often prevent error, and obviate misunderstanding. The press, not knowing what are the motives which influence government in regard to any course which government proposes to

take, begins to write upon the subject with very imperfect knowledge; and then, having once taken up a line of argument, continues to support that line for the sake of consistency, and somewhat in the spirit of partizanship.

Such information should be full.

The advantage of making such communications as are here proposed to be made, will, doubtless, be greatest in those affairs (and they are many) which are not, or, at least ought not to be, connected with party feeling. When government is resolved to take, or is inclined to take action in respect to some matter of a complicated nature, not involving great political questions, nor perhaps indeed any political questions at all, there would, in my judgment, be a great advantage in allowing the press to be very fully informed by Ministers as to the motives for that action.

Intellectual power of a Department.

There is one point, relating to this subject, which requires to be fully considered, and which is very rarely considered at all. It has regard to the relative intellectual power, at the command of any particular Department of government, and at the command of the

CHAP. XVII.

press. Most people never know, or if they do know are apt to forget, what is the intellectual power at the service of any Department of the State. A Department consists, for the most part, of a high political officer, in one or the other of the Houses of Parliament. To aid him there is a political Under-Secretary, a permanent Under-Secretary, a chief clerk, and, perhaps, four or five senior clerks. As a general rule, all of these men are men of ability, at least of an ability above the average. Moreover, they have the advantage of a large command of information; but they are very busy men, and they have very little time to spare for defending what they do.

Literary power of the press.

On the other hand, the press has the means of engaging in its service the cleverest writers of the day; and it can change them from time to time. The power, therefore, that it has of bringing into the field good argument, expressed in good language, in hostility to any Department, is very great; and is sometimes absolutely oppressive.

It is also to be borne in mind, that men in office are under great restraint. It is not

allowed to them to give explanations, except at the time, and in the place, when and where, as it is supposed, it is fitting to give such explanations.

I do not think I have exaggerated these relative conditions of power, which at times are very adverse to government Departments; they seem to me to point to three conclusions.

Public should reserve opinion.

First: That the public, keeping in mind that the government Office, which is subject to hostile criticism, may have a great deal to say for itself, but which it cannot say—or cannot say it then and there—should endeavour to reserve its final opinion on the matter in question, whatever that may be.

Advantages of the press not to be used ungenerously.

Secondly: That the press, keeping in mind the advantage which it has over the government Office, in regard to the conditions before mentioned, should endeavour not to employ that advantage ungenerously.

Information to be given early.

Thirdly: That the government Office, when it can with propriety do so, should disclose, at an early date, those facts, motives, and objects, respecting which it feels, that if

CHAP. XVII.

the public knew all, the public would probably be on its side.

Of course this could not be done in any government where the proceedings are of a sinister kind; but the Government of this country is so honestly administered, and with so much care for the public welfare, that it could often afford to act in this open and candid manner.

Public working of the British government.

It has been said, and said truly, that the working of government in this country is like that of bees in a glass hive. There are certain disadvantages in this mode of working; but in a free country, with a free press, I do not see how they are to be obviated. All I would desire is, that the glass should not be coloured or stained, or, in less metaphorical language, that from the first there should be the least opportunity given for misunderstanding, and misrepresenting the wishes and intentions of any government Department.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ECONOMY IN GOVERNMENT.

IT is a favourite maxim with many of the governing persons of the day, and notably with economical reformers, that 'you must not be generous with other people's money.'

Generosity.

That I deny. When you are in an office of great trust, and have to deal with other people's money, it is your business to try to deal with it as though it were your own; and the highest functions of your trust may, in the interest of those for whom you have to act, compel you to be generous. In fact, if you are not generous with their money, you are often doing them a great injustice and a manifest dis-service.

Lawyers' advice.

An error of the kind alluded to has crept into men's minds, and may be well exemplified by the advice lawyers sometimes give to their clients. How many lasting family feuds

CHAP. XVIII.

have arisen, because a client has listened to his lawyer, ignoring his own feelings; and all the while the lawyer has given advice *quâ* lawyer, and if he had not been advising a client, if it had been purely his own affair, he would have acted with a spirit of generosity, which he now contends is not, for a moment, to be listened to.

False economy may cause a great disaster,

I am in general much disinclined to indulge in prophecy; but, for once, I will break through the rule, and will venture to say that, I shall not be surprised if some small economy should, on some great emergency, prove to be a pregnant cause of disaster to the nation in which that small economy has been practised, causing fatal detriment to some important national force.

yet often a very plausible thing.

It is to be remembered, that all economy, judicious or injudicious, is a wonderfully plausible thing; and, moreover, it has this specious advantage, that it can be stated so undeniably—in black and white, as we say. For example, the holder of an office dies. The rigid economist, who has power in the matter, sees that here is an opportunity for effecting a saving to the public, as he calls

CHAP. XVIII.

A case of false economy.

it. We will say, that the late holder of the office received 800*l.* a-year, and did good service for it. The economist abolishes the office altogether, throwing the duties of it upon some other holder of office, with a slight increase of his salary. The public is saved, perhaps, 700*l.* a-year, according to the figures. But (and I am not drawing upon my fancy for the facts) the new duties are imposed upon a man who, though intelligent and clever enough in other respects, is wofully unfit to perform these new functions. He is, for instance, well versed in calculation, and has gained much credit by the advice which he has given to government upon matters of finance. He is now to have by this addition to his duties, a function to perform which requires, perhaps, much knowledge of men, and much skill in managing them. It is to be expected, that he will fail in the performance of the new duties, and thereby a pecuniary loss to the public may be occasioned, in comparison with which the saving that has been effected by the abolition of the office is wholly incommensurable.

CHAP. XVIII.

Trust in agents.

There is not anything which rewards the individual employer of labour better than supreme trust in his agents. For once that this trust is abused, it is used, nay it is made remunerative, in a hundred instances. If you do not trust your agents thoroughly, even in matters of expense, you must organize a system of checking, which is of itself expensive; and, what is much worse, is a hindrance that tends to efface responsibility, and to prevent rapidity of action.

Distrust false economy.

As I am, however, dealing with the question of economy, pure and simple, it is, as regards that question alone, that I maintain that the economy, which is sought to be obtained by a system of distrust, is likely to result in increased expense. For example, take any one of the great Offices of State. If every item of their expenditure is to be supervised by other Departments, there is great expense in this supervision; and there is no impulse given to the heads of the office to regard economy in their expenditure, as a thing for which they are responsible, and for effecting which they are to have the entire

credit. If, on the other hand, they are intrusted, to a certain extent, with the control of their own expenses, they are more likely to have a pride in keeping those expenses within due bounds, and at the same time, they will always have a great care not to impair the efficiency of their respective offices, which is, naturally, the first thing that a Department looks to, and ought to look to.

Ridiculous supervision.

No person, who has not had any experience of the effect of ridiculous supervision as regards small matters of expense in public Offices, can imagine how much loss of valuable time, and increase of worry are occasioned by this interference—as for instance, when it descends into such particulars (not imaginary) as this—Whether, in the opinion of one office, a broom is sufficiently worn out by use in another office to make it necessary that a new broom should be provided. Moreover, and this is no small point, men's dignity is hurt by being obliged to deal with these absurdly trivial questions; and a man, perhaps one in high authority, curses in his heart the having taken service with an employer

CHAP. XVIII.

who thinks fit to vex him, and take up his time with questions of this nature.

True economy,

Hitherto we have been considering the errors of a false and spurious economy. But there is a real and true economy, which the public servants of our own, or any other country, may be educated to regard as one of their highest and best functions.

a result of trust.

In private life, in works executed by the agents of any large and wise employer of labour, you will mostly find a devotion to their master in matters of expense, which makes them more careful and saving of his money than he is himself. That man has seen but little of the world, or has been very unobservant, who has not noticed many instances of this, the highest, the best, and the most continuous economy; and it is one which can be elicited by judicious trust, and by imposing upon agents that responsibility which is a source of enlightenment, as well as of the most unselfish and dutiful action.

Before dismissing this subject, I must return to that branch of public economy, which consists in the abolition of offices. In what

CHAP. XVIII.

I have before said, this question was treated in reference only to the duties of the office, which has been abolished, being committed to persons who are unfitted to perform them. But there is a question of a very different nature which requires like consideration. If you wish government to be conducted in such a manner, that there is much hopefulness left for the persons who are employed under it, you must have offices which should be the reward of long, or of special service, but which should not in themselves be offices of excessive work, though not mere sinecures.

Abolition of offices.

Reward for services.

For example: there shall be some Board or Commission consisting of five members. The work, we will suppose, could really be done by four, if each one of those four worked at the full stretch of his power. With a large-sighted view of the public service, it may be most desirable to retain that fifth place, considering it only as a reward for public service. There are many persons employed in the civil service of. this country, who cannot otherwise be fitly rewarded.

There is scarcely a more important office,

CHAP. XVIII.

under government, than that of private secretary to a Cabinet Minister. The Minister, for his own sake, generally takes care to make a very good choice in this matter. The choice, in the first instance, mostly, falls upon a very young man. The relation of parties in this country, unlike that of other countries, has in it, on the whole, so little of hostile bitterness, that this private secretary is very frequently recommended by the out-going to the in-coming Minister; and the recommendation is accepted. Thus it happens, that a man is often employed for many years as a private secretary to successive Ministers. How is this man to be rewarded? The reward has generally been found for him by appointing him, after many years of hard and anxious service, as a member of some government Board.

Private secretaries,

What I have said, with regard to private secretaries, applies to other official persons.

how to be rewarded.

Now, there is an answer, at first sight plausible, which may be given to this line of argument. It might be said, always pay a man at once exactly for the service he does,

and leave hope out of the question. My answer is, that you would not get such good work, and that you would put a young man quite out of his place in the Civil Service, and probably do him a great deal of harm, if you were to reduce his expectancy to an immediate money payment. CHAP. XVIII.

To put the matter in a more general form, you must have some offices in the public service corresponding to the Deaneries and Canonries in the Church, to which you may appoint men whom you have tried in subordinate employments; and to reward whom you will find no better way than by conferring upon them appointments of more dignity and more pay, though perhaps involving less exacting work. No service of the State will be conducted well, in which you cut off the sources of hope. And, with regard to the severest economy, it will be found that the abolition of an office, such as I have described, is ultimately a very bad bargain for the public. Proposal for rewarding service. Hope of reward should always exist.

It was a very bold saying, in which I ventured to declare, at the beginning of this

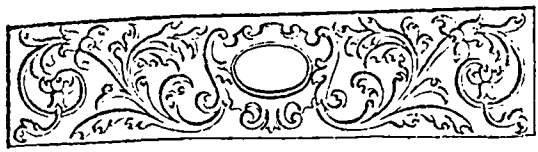
CHAP. XVIII.

Essay, that it was necessary sometimes to be generous with the public money. This saying may, however, be thoroughly justified, if we acknowledge the fact that the first thing to be aimed at by the government, or by any employer, is to get the best service. Good service, good paid service (I am one of those who do not believe in unpaid service), must be handsomely remunerated, whether the employer of labour is a private individual or the State. I would have the State to be considered as the most generous employer of labour, so that it should ever have the best name for liberality in the labour market, and be able to attract to itself whatever form of talent it may wish to command.

Best service, how obtained.

It may be a somewhat subtle and Machiavellian way of looking at the matter; but I have ever observed, that occasional acts of extreme generosity on the part of an employer have an almost disproportionate effect in inducing men to seek for work under that man; and that, to express the matter vulgarly, nothing pays better than these occasional acts of generosity.

In fine, while pursuing a system of just economy, a government should always avoid such a lowering of salaries and rewards of all kinds as would render its service less than it ought to be to men of talent and education, of whom, happily, there is no lack in this country.



CHAPTER XIX.

DIPLOMACY.

CHAP. XIX.

We hardly ever give credit enough to inventors. Custom has rendered dull our perception of the audacity of their enterprizes, and of the difficulty they must have had in persuading other people to adopt their inventions. The wheel seems a simple thing; but, doubtless, ages passed away before a man was found skilful enough to invent a wheel, and persevering enough to induce his fellow-men to make use of this new and strange invention. The fork is an implement of comparatively recent invention; and it gives almost a new view of the great men of the world to think that, except in China, up to the sixteenth century, they chiefly employed their fingers in eating.

Diplomacy a new invention.

Now, though we hardly ever consider diplo-

macy as a new invention, it certainly is so. If we turn to the history of savage nations, or of nations in a partial state of civilization, we do not find that any such thing as diplomacy existed amongst them. Ambassadors were frequently sent from one people to another (the word ambassador originally meant only messenger), and it was a very great invention, in the progress of national life, when ambassadors became resident diplomatists, and permanent representatives of Sovereigns, or of sovereign States. It may be wondered how any nation was induced to allow certain men from another nation, to come and reside amongst them, and to enjoy privileges of immunity, when their functions were somewhat of the nature of espial; and when they were expected to give information to their own government of much that might be prejudicial to the people amongst whom they were to reside. I seem to hear all the remarks, that the extreme conservatives in any nation must have made, when it was first proposed that ambassadors should not merely come with

Ambassadors originally special envoys.

CHAP. XIX.

a message and return with an answer, but that they should take up their abode at some central place in a foreign dominion. Ultimately, however, the uses of diplomacy have been discerned by almost all nations; and these uses are very great.

Misunderstanding the main cause of quarrels.

I suppose it would be generally admitted, that one of the main causes of quarrels, whether domestic or national, is misunderstanding. Now, resident diplomatists certainly have great opportunities of removing misunderstandings between nations. Some persons have accused diplomatists of having furthered rather than prevented wars. This, however, is a most unjust accusation; and I think it can hardly be doubted that if the negotiations of nations in regard to the great matters of peace and war, were carried on by ambassadors (using the word in its strict sense), who went and returned with messages, there would be far more misunderstanding than there is at present.

Moreover, it is a great advantage to know what is going on in a foreign State with respect to all the arts of peace, including

legislation and administration. How desirable it is, for instance, for one nation to be speedily and accurately informed of the special laws and facts relating to commerce, in another nation—also as to its management of infectious and contagious diseases affecting men or cattle.

If nations are kept in harmonious intercourse by means of diplomacy, they are perpetually borrowing from each other's wisdom and experience. An interchange of thought between nations on many of the great subjects of human life and endeavour is most valuable; and this interchange is best accomplished through diplomatic agents. The traveller's view of any country is apt to be very vague and incomplete, especially in regard to those subjects concerning which it is most desirable that people at home should be informed. The merchant, even if resident in a foreign country, naturally takes but a very limited view of the general affairs of that country, his observations being, for the most part, restricted to those matters which chiefly affect his own business.

Vague views of travellers.

CHAP. XIX.

Even the consular agent has a much narrower sphere than the diplomatic agent, who may be expected not only to inform his own government of facts, but of the view of the foreign government to which he is accredited, and of the general disposition of the people, in reference to those facts.

You do not want to know merely the laws that have been passed in any other country to avert, or control, any evil which exists in your own country, or threatens it. You want to know how those laws have been received, and whether they are acted up to. If you obtained information of this kind only from the foreign government itself, the information would justly be very suspect; for no government is fond of speaking frankly about its failures. From your resident diplomatist, however, you may learn not only what has been sought to be done by legislation or otherwise; but what is really effected; and if there is any failure in this respect there will be no scruple on his part in giving you due information of its nature and extent, and of the reasons, in his opinion, which have caused it.

Utility of representation in foreign countries.

CHAP. XIX.

The British are the greatest travellers in the world; they have the largest commercial marine; and they are by far the most vigorous and enterprizing of colonists. They are, therefore, more interested than the men of any other nation in learning all that is going on in foreign countries.

British the most enterprizing colonists.

Some may say, that the foregoing are the lesser uses of diplomacy. It may be doubted whether they are the lesser; but, supposing them to be so, I think it may be shown that what are called the great objects of diplomacy, those which chiefly relate to peace or war, are also much facilitated by diplomacy, and especially by maintaining the highest class of diplomatic agents abroad.

It must be admitted, that on any occasion when war takes place, it is the failure, though it may not be the fault, of diplomacy. Diplomatists must therefore be even more anxious than other men to avert war. It is certainly an advantage for the rest of the world, that there should be a body of men, for the most part highly cultivated, and having the ear of

War, the failure of diplomacy.

CHAP. XIX.

Courts and Cabinets, whose main interests compel them to desire peace.

A failure of diplomacy.

Now, take the most recent case in which diplomacy has failed, and the peace of the world has been largely disturbed. This may be owing to one or other of two causes—or, as is more probable, to the two causes being combined. Either diplomacy failed to give one of the principal combatants a just representation of the power that was about to be arrayed against him; or he and his Ministers failed to give due heed to the representations of their diplomatic agents.

Probable cause.

If I might hazard a conjecture, which neither I, nor anyone else, have the means at present of verifying, partial information was given to that Government. But the information in question did not, perhaps, fully convey all that was to be learnt about the disposition of the minor Powers, and especially of the common people.

On the other hand, it may be conjectured that sufficient attention was not given to that information which was received. If, however, in any particular case, diplomatists have

CHAP. XIX.

failed to give all the information which they ought to have given; or if the suggestions of diplomatists have not been sufficiently attended to, it is by no means proved that diplomacy is useless, because it has not been made due use of.

Publication of diplomatic correspondence

There is a very difficult and delicate matter connected with diplomacy, and that is, the publication of diplomatic correspondence. There is always some danger, in a free country, of this publication being made so frequently, and so unreservedly, as to destroy much of the benefit that might be derived from diplomacy. I will give an instance of what I mean, which, though not exactly a publication of diplomatic correspondence, was a transaction of a similar nature. It occurred many years ago.

Sometim injurious

There was a law proposed by the Home Government for a certain Dependency. It was a very good law both for the Dependency and for the Imperial Government. The people, however, whom it was mainly meant to benefit, did not receive the proposition in a favourable manner: indeed, were entirely

CHAP. XIX.

recalcitrant. The Governor wrote home a confidential letter to the following effect. There was no hope of carrying the measure now, he said, but he foresaw that in time it might be carried. He should keep the matter constantly in view; and he indicated various ways by which he hoped in time to persuade those persons who were now opposed to the measure to be reconciled to it. Certain correspondence, connected with this Dependency, was called for in Parliament, and this letter was published.

The Governor soon after came to England, and did not fail to express his vexation at finding that this confidential letter of his had been made public. The first news he had received of its publication was from his own people, who naturally taunted him by recounting the means by which he intended to persuade them. Now, in no branch of human affairs is it very desirable to tell people beforehand all the ways by which you intend to persuade them to consent to something, even though it may be greatly for their own interest that they should consent, and

even though your intended modes of persuasion may not indicate anything that is wrong or sinister.

I would guard myself from being held to maintain, that diplomacy has never done any mischief; but what I do maintain is that, upon the whole, it has been greatly serviceable in preventing, or at least in postponing (and the latter is no mean advantage), the commencement of hostilities. Diplomacy does not pretend to eradicate human passions and ambitions, but it tends to mitigate their consequences. The main point is, whether a resident diplomatist is not much more serviceable, in this respect, than an ambassador, according to the ancient acceptation of the term.

Diplomacy a preventative of war.

There is a notion among some people that the days of diplomacy have gone by; but I would rather contend that there is a brighter future opening before it, and that, as the world grows wiser and better, diplomacy will be found to be more and more effectual in preventing, or postponing, that greatest of calamities—war.

The future of diplomacy.

CHAPTER XX.

ON THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS.

CHAP. XX.

THERE is very little to be said on this great subject, which is not essentially of a commonplace character. In fact, it might almost be written by stringing together a series of proverbs. Men have not been for many thousand years upon the earth, without finding out their own faults, or rather those of other people, in the common affairs of life, and expressing their sense of these faults in pregnant sentences, which have met with universal acceptation. The worst, however, of proverbs is that, when you have a proverb embodying one phase of thought, you generally want an exactly opposite proverb to correct it.

Proverbs to be considered in pairs.

In considering this subject, it will be well to take a particular instance, and endeavour to work it out thoroughly. Let us suppose

CHAP. XX.

a case of considerable magnitude; not of a legal character, but into which law enters, as it does into most human affairs; which involves questions of general policy, and of administration. This case is submitted to a Minister by his immediate subordinate.

Case submitted to a Minister.

The first thing for the Minister to do, is to begin at the beginning. This of course appears a self-evident remark, but it is an essential one. It will not do for him to be satisfied in taking up any great affair at a certain stage of the proceedings, upon the assumption that he has a perfect account from his subordinate of all that has happened up to that time. He will almost always have his reward in beginning at the beginning, and keeping carefully to dates, which are the backbone, as it were, of every long series of transactions.

The study of history.

The need for this somewhat laborious mode of procedure may be aptly illustrated by what often happens in reading history. I strongly suspect, that when conclusions from history are falsely drawn, it generally results from the enquirer neglecting his dates; and having present to his mind numbers of facts,

CHAP. XX.

which were not present to the minds of those who were enacting considerable parts in history. The student, for example, is aware of what was the ultimate result in history, of some long conflict of contending principles brought into action; he knows that Protestantism ultimately prevailed in this country; and does not reflect, that to the promoters of that great work, that final result was anything but self-evident. In few words, he has not the right set of facts before him, at the right dates.

Exactly a similar thing occurs in minor matters—in the current business of daily life; and therefore it is needful, not only to begin at the beginning; but at each stage of the case, to consider what was then the exact state of facts, including also the arguments that had then been brought forward on all sides.

References and quotations to be verified.

A practice, that should be universally adopted in matters of business is not to accept a reference, or even quotation, without verification. In this heavy case, which I have imagined to be brought before a Minister, reference will perhaps be made to Acts of

Parliament, Orders in Council, letters of a former Minister, and other documents. Not only the exact words, but the context, must be looked to in all these references. It is not that men mean to deceive, but that they are terribly prone to inaccuracy, and that inaccuracy is likely to be greatly increased, perhaps unconsciously, by their own prejudices and desires.

The aid that precedent affords.

There then enters the question of the aid, and direction that are to be gained by precedent. The aid that precedent affords is not to be despised, especially as all mankind are apt to have a great respect for it; but, at the same time, it is a power to which no man, who has any faith in himself, will permit himself to be made a slave.

Advice of others.

In the conduct of this case, and in the conclusions which the Minister will have to arrive at, from time to time (for I imagine it to be a case of largeness and continuity), he will probably not act without the advice and suggestions of others, especially his subordinates. It becomes, therefore, a matter of great importance for him to understand the

CHAP. XX.

general bent of the characters of those persons, whom he must take into council. Every man has some such bent; and he is seldom, if ever, free from the inclinations of thought which that bent of character determines. One man is nearly sure to take a harsh, or at any rate a severe view, both of persons and of conduct. Being also an accurate and painstaking man himself, he is apt to conclude that other men (the men, for instance, involved in this case) are as accurate and painstaking as he is, and will attribute to other motives, those statements of theirs which merely arise from the ordinary inaccuracy of mankind. There is, of course, the character of an exactly opposite tendency. And indeed, without going further into this matter, it may be laid down as a maxim for the Minister's consideration, that whatever he receives in the way of suggestion or comment, whether from a colleague or a subordinate, is always to be fined down, as it were, by keeping in mind the peculiar character of the man by whom it is made. Moreover, he can thus arrive at the appreciation of an average of thought, and

Characters of advisers to be allowed for.

feeling by balancing the views of men of opposite character. With very few men is the dry light of the intellect the only light which they look up to.

Bent of his own mind to be guarded against.

Doubtless, too, the Minister—or deciding person—has to beware of indulging too much the bent of his own character; but here a considerable subtlety of observation should enter. Every man should be aware, that he will, ultimately, act in accordance with the bent of his character; and therefore that it is useless for him to assume, by fits and starts, another form of character which does not belong to him. He may resolve to act in direct oppugnancy to what he knows to be the natural inclination of his mind, but if he does so, he must do it handsomely and consistently, and must not play two different parts, in the course of the same transaction.

General considerations.

Then, in any important case, of the kind I am supposing, which is to involve administration, there are certain general considerations, as regards the conduct of mankind, which should ever be present to the mind of

CHAP. XX.

the man who has to take action in the case. To enumerate these considerations would be a lengthy and laborious task: it will suffice to point out two of the most serious.

Allowance for indolence.

In the first place; the administrator can hardly ever make too much allowance for the indolence of mankind. Where his administration will fail, is in people omitting to do, from indolence, that which he supposes he has given them sufficient means and instructions for doing. Hence, in all matters of administration, continuous supervision and inspection are most needful, and as in also great preciseness of instruction.

For disobedience.

In the next place, he must calculate upon a large amount of disobedience, resulting, not from wilfulness, but from misunderstanding, or from the subordinate 'thinking,' as he is pleased to call it, for himself, when he has received precise directions from his superior. There is one memorable instance of this kind,

The Duke of Wellington.

which happened to the late Duke of Wellington. It was in the retreat from Burgos. 'Knowing the direct road was impassable, he ordered the movement by another road,

longer and apparently more difficult; this seemed so extraordinary to some general officers, that, after consulting together, they deemed their commander unfit to conduct the army, and led their troops by what appeared to them the fittest line of retreat! He had before daylight placed himself at an important point on his own road, and waited impatiently for the arrival of the leading division until dawn; then suspecting what had happened he galloped to the other road and found the would-be commanders stopped by water. The insubordination and the danger to the army were alike glaring, yet the practical rebuke was so severe and well-timed, the humiliation so complete and so deeply felt, that with one proud sarcastic observation, indicating contempt more than anger, he led back the troops, and drew off all his forces safely.'[1]

I now come to that which is perhaps, after all, the most important point in dealing with this considerable case, which I have imagined

[1] Napier: *Peninsular War*, iv. 386.

CHAP. XX.

as laid before a Minister. It especially relates to expression, and will illustrate what I had in my thoughts, when I suggested that expression should be made one of the main objects of the education of a statesman. The particular form of expression, which is now wanted by my imaginary Minister, is concerned with limitation. He will generally find, that when he goes wrong in the expression of his views, or his decisions, it is because the form of expression used has been needlessly wide—in matters, too, where a single extraneous word may pledge him to actions, which he has no intention of undertaking. That the words should exactly clothe the subject-matter dealt with, is one of the greatest aids and safeguards in the conduct of all business, whether it appertains to the high art of statesmanship, or to the work-a-day business of the world.

Rules not to be confused with principles.

Another point to be carefully watched in the conduct of business is, not to confuse rules with principles, and especially, that no man should needlessly lay down rules which may hamper himself. His principles may be ever

so strict: the rules he lays down should be very elastic, and certainly he should not be prone to communicate to others, needlessly, those rules which he may have instituted as guides to himself. Hence, in making communications upon the subject of the business alluded to, it is seldom wise to say, 'We never do this, or that, or the other—it is contrary to our rules, or our practice.' Perhaps, in a few weeks or months, there may come a case in which it is necessary to violate the rule, or depart from the practice; and then there is an appearance of lamentable inconsistency. The circumstances and conditions of life in any community, where high civilization prevails, are so numerous, various, and difficult to be imagined, even by men of fertile imaginations, that no prudent man shuts himself up in rules made by himself, like a silkworm winding itself up in its own cocoon.

Not to be communicated needlessly.

Then there is the general correspondence about the matter to be considered. Herein there must be much continuity of aim and purpose, and, therefore, clearness of expres-

CHAP. XX.

sion. If we could trace up some of the greatest errors to their source, we should probably find, that many a decision which has failed to decide, and has, indeed, failed to convey its exact meaning in any way, has been thus made inefficient by its language, in some of the principal sentences, being thorough patchwork: designed by one man; corrected by another; revised by a third, while some little point, merely of diction, has at the last been interlineated by a fourth. The final drawing of any important document should be one man's work, embodying the various corrections made by other men's minds, but having that unity and force which can only be the outcome of a single mind.

Failure through patchwork.

Another important point in the transaction of business, and especially in such a case as I have been considering, is to divide the subject-matter into several sections. One of the chief arts in mastering any subject consists in subdivision. It is an art which presupposes the existence of method. In a previous chapter on education, I was able to make only a few suggestions as to how this supreme effort

Division of subject into sections.

of division and classification, called method, could be taught. It is a thing, however, of inestimable value, and must, somehow or other, be acquired by any man who has to deal promptly with business of much pressure and magnitude. Referring to the case in question, there may be scores of arguments applying to different sections of the case. If these arguments are left as separate forces, as it were, and are not brought, as a mathematician would say, to 'resultants' in their respective sections, the man who has to decide, wanders about in a jungle of unsettled thought, and is perpetually taking up his facts and arguments at wrong times, in the course of forming his determination. Whereas, if the various facts and arguments had been brought to their conclusions in their respective sections, the Minister's labour, in coming to a determination upon the whole subject, would have been almost indefinitely facilitated.

Arguments of respective sections to be conclusions.

This supposed case has now been considered in much detail; and it has been shown that there are many ways by which the labour of dealing with it may be lightened, while

CHAP. XX.

the issue is rendered more felicitous and conclusive. The same methods which are applied to great matters of statesmanship are, no doubt, applicable to all kinds of business.

I shall conclude this chapter with a remark, which also applies to all kinds of business—indeed to almost all forms of human endeavour. It is that the *indirect* results of any course of action are nearly always the most important. Hence it is, that what we call worldly wisdom is so difficult to attain; for hardly any man is sagacious enough, or has that breadth of knowledge, which would enable him to see all the indirect consequences of any course of action he decides upon; although he may perceive very clearly the direct result of that course.

Importance of indirect results.

For example, he discerns an evil; he resolves to provide a remedy; but the mode by which he does so is, perhaps, one which indirectly shall be fraught with good or evil consequences, far exceeding in magnitude those direct results that he distinctly foresees, and is resolved to accomplish.

Remedies fraught with great indirect consequences.

CHAP. XX.

We may turn to natural science for an illustration. There are rays of heat and of actinism, which are not revealed by the spectrum, but which play a vital part in the operations of nature. The statesman who does not take note of the probable consequences of his actions, other than those which are their direct result, resembles the philosopher who should treat the visible light-rays as though they were not accompanied by other rays, for the effects of which he must not fail to make wide allowance, and far-seeing calculation.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHAT THE PROSPERITY OF A NATION CONSISTS.

CHAP. XXI.

WHILE we are considering the various functions and modes of government, it is desirable, from time to time, to bring back our minds to a consideration of what should be the main objects of government.

National and individual prosperity.

In the first place; it must be recollected, that the prosperity of a nation is a thing somewhat different from the prosperity even of all the individuals who constitute it. To begin with, there is this main element of difference—namely, that the life of a nation is of so much longer duration than that of an individual. It might so happen, that a great majority of the individuals, composing a nation, should at any time be singularly unprosperous—should, indeed, be going through a phase of unprosperousness which might,

Not identical.

after all, conduce largely to the ultimate welfare of the nation, and be, in fact, a necessary form of that nation's continuous prosperity. It can hardly be said, that the individuals of a nation are prosperous, while it is in the agony of a revolution, and when every peaceful citizen is crippled in his resources, as also in the profitable use of his labour. But, for the ultimate prosperity of the nation, this revolution may be absolutely essential.

Revolutions may be necessary.

Another aspect of this matter may be obtained by the consideration of what takes place in a nation, consisting chiefly of slaves and slave-owners. This is a very simple form of human society. It has immense disadvantages, as we all know, in regard to the social relations of master and man. But it has also another enormous disadvantage. As the great bulk of the nation requires food, clothing, and habitation of the same kind and pattern, the arts of life must languish; diversity of culture will be wanting; and skill in artizanship cannot be educed in such a community. No man, with any foresight, can call that a prosperous nation, for though there

A nation of slaves and of slave-owners.

CHAP. XXI.

may be considerable material comfort for the slaves, as well as the masters, that nation must be at the mercy of any nation of freemen, simply because of the diversity of product and of culture, which belong to the one, and are so greatly wanting in the other.

Now, I would ask my readers to apply their reflections on this slave State to other States, which are not infested with slavery. They will perceive, I think, how much advantage is to be gained by great diversity in the conditions of the various classes constituting any State.

At the present time there is a dead set made against all privileges, and against anything which tends to make diversity in rank and fortune in the State. This is the tendency of what is called the democratic movement of the world. This democratic movement has its origin in some of the noblest aspirations of our nature; but we must take care that it does not dwarf the highest forms of culture and well-being, while it tends to raise, politically speaking, the lowest class of our fellow-subjects.

Democratic movement.

We should avail ourselves of this force

Use to be made of it.

to raise the lowest class of the community, but should be very careful not to make the movement a destructive, instead of a constructive, one.

There is no doubt that if, having the world to deal with as a new thing, we could begin by initiating a social system, which should prevent all poverty, and protect all helplessness, much might be said in favour of endeavouring to institute such a system. It is manifest, I think, that the ancient Peruvians, under the rule of the Incas, approached more nearly to the adoption of that social system than any other nation which, as far as we know, has ever appeared on the face of this earth. But even if we had, with our present knowledge, to begin again the peopling of this world, it would still remain somewhat doubtful, whether the social system indicated would be the best one possible—namely, that which would lead to the highest development of mankind.

Social system of Peruvians.

But we must, in fact, look at the world as it is before us—a world bearing on its surface enormous diversity of habitations; great

CHAP. XXI.

variety of agriculture; various races and orders of men differently educated; in short, a world transmitted to us, stamped with the result of all the work of our ancestors—work intellectual, moral, and physical—and we have to make the best of it. But we shall fail in doing so, if we omit to take into consideration those enlarged views for the good of the people in general, which were often sadly absent from their labours.

A nation is really in a hideous state of difficulty and danger, which has its feet sunk in the mire of ignorance, to use a bold metaphor, while its body is of somewhat noble aspect, and its head may seem to tower towards the skies. I cannot look at its situation as otherwise than one of extreme difficulty and of great danger. I can no more call that a prosperous nation, than I could call that nation happy, which exists at a dead level of attainment—physical, intellectual, and moral—and which gives but little hope of further advancement towards the highest aims of life.

There is a great delusion, which, I fear, besets us all, and which often daunts our best

hopes and noblest aspirations, which delusion is mainly fostered by an ill-considered application of history. We are apt to fancy that the fate of a nation necessarily resembles that of a single human being—that it has its boyhood, its youth, its maturity of manhood, and its senility. I believe, that if we were bolder in our hopes, our aspirations, and our endeavours, we should resolutely refuse to consider nations in this limited manner; but should resolve, that we would consider the nation, to which we may belong, as capable of reinvigorating itself by returning to any of the forementioned epochs of its national life, to which, for the time, it would be most advantageous to return. This I admit is an enthusiastic view; but if many men partook of it, it would be capable of being realized. Despondency and indolence are the two main agents that restrain the progress of mankind, both in material and in social well-being. Our enlightenment should lead us continually into reconstruction of all that is fruitful—as well as into destruction of all that is harmful.

The several ages of a nation.

They do not necessarily tend to decadence.

Many years ago, when elaborate researches were being made into the condition of the

Dangerous classes.

CHAP. XXI.

lowest classes in London, it was stated that it contained about 350,000 persons belonging to what may well be called the dangerous classes. Now, this word 'dangerous' is not meant to apply merely to the politically dangerous. It is meant to include those who, from their miserable condition of life, are dangerous to the well-being of the State from the means they afford for the promotion of disease; ignorance; crime; and the example of evil living of all kinds. A State cannot be called prosperous, which contains a very large body in such a condition as I have just described.

Action of the British government.

Of late years, however, not only has our Government devoted itself to the effort (an entirely new effort, by the way, and the highest duty of a government) of ameliorating the condition and promoting the well-being of its lowest class, upon which the whole superstructure rests, but there have been found individuals who, highly placed themselves, have given their lives and fortunes to this same great object.

In few words, the prosperity of a nation consists in combining the highest culture—

Prosperity of nation.

which must always be somewhat connected with privilege—with a due consideration for the lowest section of the community, which for ever deserves, and will amply repay, our utmost regard for its well-being. The object of statesmen should very much resemble that of a good schoolmaster, who, while he keeps an eye upon the most prominent and hopeful of his scholars, is yet worth nothing, as a schoolmaster, if he does not care more for the far larger number, who can only be expected to attain to mediocrity of culture.

It would be a sad thing, and in no way conduce to our national prosperity, if we could only raise the lowest by the depression of the highest; and it would be unwise to ignore the danger, always to be apprehended and guarded against, of the tendency to lower the highest development of a nation, by an ill-considered destruction of means, opportunities, and privileges, which would in no way promote the grand object of raising the lowest class to a state of political efficiency, and of unenvious and hopeful well-being.

In order to consider my subject with the

CHAP. XXI.

care that it deserves, it is requisite to dwell somewhat upon the fate and fortunes of those nations which have distinguished themselves in the world's history, but which have subsequently fallen into decadence. I doubt whether any of the reasons, which have been assigned for that decadence, reach to the real cause—the *causa causans*, as the metaphysicians would call it. I doubt, for instance, whether luxury, or whether the irruption of barbarian hordes, has been the true cause of the downfall of nations. I think it would be found in the exhaustion of hope and purpose—an exhaustion to which bad Government must very greatly contribute. Take the Romans for instance. They had done almost everything that a nation could do; and had done it well. They had colonized; they had conquered; they had, to a certain degree, assimilated other peoples to themselves. They had tried all forms of government. But there came a time when they became hide-bound, as it were; and there was a total want of hope and faith in the nation. This, I believe, may be perceived throughout the

Decadence through exhaustion.

Rome.

literature of the Lower Empire. Men had ceased to believe, that there was anything good to be done in respect of political and social life. And men are so constituted, that they cannot work well, or even fight well, when their minds are in this state of stagnation. CHAP. XXI.

Stagnation fatal to prosperity.

Now, there may be a state of stagnation which is not in this way fatal, because it arises from something which can be removed. Take, for instance, the superincumbent weight of slavery. That may cause a nation to stagnate as long as it exists. But once remove it, or begin to remove it, the energies of the nation are unfettered, and it springs up again with renewed life. Again, take a nation which, from some circumstances, has not hitherto engaged in commerce. Let there be an outlet made for commercial enterprise, and this nation will revive. The Romans, however, had tried everything; had succeeded to a certain extent in their various endeavours, but had not afterwards found any new outlet for hope, endeavour, and perseverance. The fate of the

Commerce.

CHAP. XXI.

How the Roman Empire might have been prolonged.

Roman Empire would, in all probability, have been very different, and it might have subsisted for many generations longer, if the New World had been discovered by a Roman. The vast undertakings, which this discovery would have occasioned, would have infused new life throughout the Roman Empire, and would have given exactly that stimulus, and that hopefulness, which I hold to be the mainsprings of a nation's prosperity.

Spain and the New World.

In answer to this, it will be said: that Spain did not profit by her conquest of the New World. I contend that she did profit, and very largely, and that the conquest of the New World was not the cause of the decadence of Spain. That was occasioned by far other causes. Any limitation of thought in anything in which humanity is deeply concerned, is a cause for decadence in a nation. Now, Spain with her Inquisition, and with the continuous bigotry of successive kings, was limited in religious thought. The physical result of this limitation is most conspicuous. The power of Spain broke itself, as it were, upon the Protestantism of the

Netherlands. The character of the people was such as to give the greatest weight to monarchical institutions, and the greatest effect to the character of the reigning monarch. The Spaniards, from the accession of Philip II., in 1556, to the present time, have been, with the sole exception of Charles III., exceedingly unfortunate in this respect. They were also singularly unfortunate in their relations with other countries, which had, notably in the case of the War of Succession, pretexts for interfering in the internal affairs of Spain. Doubtless other causes for her downfall might be adduced by anyone well skilled in Spanish history; but I am only concerned, at this moment, to show, that the discovery and conquest of the New World, by Spain, was not the compelling cause of its temporary decadence; and, certainly, I do not know how it can be maintained that an increase of enterprize, an enlarged field for adventure, great addition of material products, and an immense extension of commerce (all which good things accrued to Spain by the conquest of the

Political misfortunes of Spain.

CHAP. XXI.

Indies), can be deemed to be hurtful to a nation's prosperity.

Prosperity moral rather than physical.

At the same time, I must own, for this is part of my main argument, that all these good things might exist in a nation which yet should be hastening to its downfall. For, after all, I consider the prosperity we are now discussing, to depend upon what is mental and moral rather than upon what is physical. It is not present prosperity, it is not even growth; it is, to use a big word of which Dr. Johnson was very fond, potentiality; and we may even recall a memorable occasion on which he used that word, which will amply illustrate my present use of it. 'We are not selling a parcel of tubs and vats,' he exclaimed, when he was acting as Mr. Thrale's executor; 'we are selling the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice.' Now it is this potentiality, not merely of growing rich, but of being something more or other, of doing something more or other, than it has hitherto been or done, which constitutes the essential and assured prosperity of a nation. There should be

Saying of Dr. Johnson.

CHAP. XXI.

growth, or at least the power of growth; there *must* be hope; there must be considerable freedom of thought, and action, in any nation that claims to be considered prosperous.

Power of growth essential.

In any endeavour to show in what the prosperity of a nation consists, and how the decadence of nations has often been precipitated, it may not be inappropriate to make some allusion to the subject of mob-government. I suppose it will be admitted that there is no surer sign, if not of the decadence of a nation, at any rate of the weakness of its legislative government, than if mob-rule is permitted, though only occasionally, to prevail.

Mob government.

I have elsewhere[1] described at large what I think to be the peculiar evil of a mob, and the danger to be apprehended from a mob governing. It is, briefly, that a mob differs in its composition from day to day—nay, from hour to hour. It cannot well, therefore, have experience, or conscience, or consistency to appeal to.

Danger from it.

[1] *Conversations on War and Culture.* Smith, Elder & Co. London, 1871.

CHAP. XXI.

The subject, however, which I am going to treat, is of a much wider nature. It has reference to those principles and practices that lead to, and initiate mob-government—which principles and practices are often encouraged by men of considerable powers of thought and understanding.

Principles which lead to mob rule.

As a preliminary, I would ask such men to consider, what a serious thing it is to inculcate principles which tend to revolutionize a State. It is like disturbing virgin earth, which it would take unknown ages to compress again into its original form. It was not without some show of reason, that our ancestors decreed the most fearful punishments for high treason. Consider the labour of untold generations, that has gone to make a State, even if that State be one which has many faults of government, and much that requires to be remedied or improved. There is an admirable passage in Montesquieu's '*Grandeur des Romains*': 'C'est ici qu'il faut se donner le spectacle des choses humaines. Qu'on voie dans l'histoire de Rome tant de guerres entreprises, tant de sang répandu, tant de

Passage from Montesquieu.

The case of Rome.

peuples détruits, tant de grandes actions, tant de triomphes, tant de politique, de sagesse, de prudence, de constance, de courage; ce projet d'envahir tout, si bien formé, si bien soutenu, si bien fini, à quoi aboutit-il qu'à assouvir le bonheur de cinq ou six monstres ?'

Its disastrous fate.

In this case, all these labours, this thought, these sufferings, went to create the power of a brutal emperor; but the same thing may happen in the creation of the power of a brutal mob.

Now, there are several aims and principles which tend to produce a tyrant power of this description, which aims and principles are somewhat rife in the present day. These have been already touched upon, but not exactly with the same object. One of them is the abandonment of privilege. Another is the endeavour to do away with differences of station, education, and position of all kinds. Whereas, it will uniformly be found that the highest civilization co-exists with, and even depends upon, the existence of these differences. A State is never in more danger of some rude disturbance, in the way of

Rifeness of revolutionary principles.

CHAP. XXI.

revolution, than when it is composed of a few classes, the circumstances of each being nearly similar. The eloquent Landor says—'The greatest power on earth, or that ever existed on earth, is the power of the British public; its foundation morals, its fabric wisdom, its circumvallation wealth.' But even this mighty British public, with all its wisdom, its morals, and its wealth, is not safe from being imposed upon by ragged and dangerous ideas, mainly put forward by men of that smallness of purview, and narrowness of sympathy, that their minds can only entertain a few incomplete dogmas. If you observe, closely, the course of thought of any one of these fanatical thinkers, you will mostly find it to be subjected to one predominant idea. This one idea generally has some plausibility in it, and is nearly sure to be well put forward: for the man who has but one idea to manage, can manage that well, as he is not troubled by inconvenient exceptions or circumscriptions of any kind. And so the idea gets vogue—especially among the class that it is supposed to favour—and then you have the

Landor.

Men of one idea dangerous.

thinking in mobs, and the acting in mobs, which are so prejudicial to a State. CHAP. XXI.

Perils from misgovernment.

Now, turning to a very different source of danger, which may end in mob-government, I would remark that the only weight which socialist theories of the wildest kind intrinsically possess, is derived from that mis-government which has led to such degraded modes of existence, among the poorest of our people, especially in great cities. And yet I should hardly say mis-government, so much as absence of government—of that paternal government which is so much misapprehended, and so much contemned by *doctrinaires*. Government neglect leads to mob interference, and perhaps revolution.

How admirable are the words of Schiller, applied by the poet to war, but which are applicable to all violence, whether of thought or of action! I subjoin Coleridge's translation of the passage:—

> My son! of those old narrow ordinances
> Let us not hold too lightly. They are weights
> Of priceless value, which oppressed mankind
> Tied to the volatile will of their oppressors.
> For always formidable was the league

CHAP. XXI.

And partnership of free power with free will.
The way of ancient ordinanc,e though it winds,
Is yet no devious way. Straight forward goes
The lightning's path, and straight the fearful path
Of the cannon-ball. Direct it flies, and rapid,
Shattering that it *may* reach, and shattering what it reaches.
My son ! the road, the human being travels,
That on which blessing comes and goes, doth follow
The river's course, the valley's playful windings,
Curves round the corn-field and the hill of vines,
Honouring the holy bounds of property !
And thus secure, though late, leads to its end.

As I have said before; differences of condition co-exist with, and probably tend to, high civilization. It may seem inconsistent, that I should be dissatisfied with the difference of condition indicated above. But here, as elsewhere, every maxim that is laid down has to be interpreted by the aid of common sense. There are differences, and differences of condition. The one set wholesome and encouraging; the other dangerous, if not destructive.

In fine, if we wish to avoid the perils of mob-government, which even, in a short time, can put back for generations the hand upon the dial of civilization, there is not anything

we should more attend to than counteracting the prevalence of those mischievous ideas and theories which tend to the decomposition of a State—a thing so hard to re-compose, the result of so much patience, of so much endurance, and, upon the whole, of so much magnanimity. For no great State was ever built up without the toil, self-sacrifice, and renunciation of many noble persons, in many generations.

Prevention of mob-government.

APPENDIX.

APP.

SUBSEQUENTLY to writing these 'Thoughts upon Government,' my attention has been drawn to a work of Wilhelm Von Humboldt, defining the limits of the action of a State.[1] I do not know that any other writer has devoted a whole work to the consideration of this important subject: and the writer in question was a man of great eminence, and of large practical experience. The object of the work is indicated by the motto on the Title-page, which is taken from the writings of Mirabeau the elder—'Le difficile est de ne promulguer que des lois nécessaires, de rester à jamais fidèle à ce principe vraiment constitutionnel de la société, de se mettre en garde contre la fureur de gouverner, la plus funeste maladie des gouvernemens modernes.'[2]

Baron Wilhelm von Humboldt.

Object of his work.

Here, therefore, if anywhere, we might expect to find propositions laid down, which would contain fatal objections to the views which I have put forward with respect to Paternal Government. One of Von Humboldt's

[1] „Ideen zu einem Verſuch, die Gränzen der Wirkſamkeit des Staats zu beſtimmen."

[2] Mirabeau l'aîné, *sur l'Éducation publique*, p. 61.

APP.

maxims is, that it is a most unhealthy state of things when the Man is sacrificed to the Citizen: the writer's object being to protect, in every way, the individual action of the Man. It may, on the other hand, be fairly contended, that it is an evil thing to sacrifice the Citizen to the Man.

The citizen and the man.

The general proposition which Von Humboldt lays down is as follows: 'that the State must altogether and absolutely abstain from all endeavour, whether direct or indirect, to influence the customs and the character of a nation, except in so far as this is unavoidable from a natural and self-originating consequence of its own absolutely necessary measures; and that everything which has a tendency to promote this end, notably all special supervision of education, of religious institutions, or of sumptuary laws, should lie entirely beyond the limits of its action.'[1]

The State not to influence character of the nation.

This is a very severe limitation of the action of a State, more especially as by the words 'necessary measures' the Author there means, as may be discerned from the context, only those measures of legislation and administration which refer to matters of justice and of war.

Now it should be observed how even this writer, whose main object is to protect the free action of the individual, is obliged to limit his own limitation. In a succeeding chapter he says, 'The State, indeed, should

[1] „Daß der Staat ſich ſchlechterdings alles Beſtrebens, direkt oder indirekt auf die Sitten und den Charakter der Nation anders zu wirken, als inſofern dieß als eine natürliche, von ſelbſt entſtehende Folge ſeiner übrigen ſchlechterdings nothwendigen Maaßregeln unvermeidlich iſt, gänzlich enthalten müſſe, und daß alles, was dieſe Abſicht befördern kann, vorzüglich alle beſondre Aufſicht auf Erziehung, Religionsanſtalten, Luxusgeſetze u.ſ.f. ſchlechterdings außerhalb der Schranken ſeiner Wirkſamkeit liege."

APP.

in no wise provide for the positive welfare of the citizens, therefore also not for their life and health—unless, indeed, these are threatened with danger by the actions of others—but certainly for their security. And only in so far as this security itself may suffer, *for as much as fraud takes advantage of ignorance*, could such supervision come within the sphere of action of the State.[1]

Energy, the first and only virtue of mankind.

This single exception, with regard to 'the actions of others,' appears to me to justify most of what I have said respecting Paternal Government. Von Humboldt contends that energy is 'the first and only virtue of mankind;' and the reason why he deprecates governmental interference is lest it should diminish this energy. But still he is compelled to make the important foregoing exception to his general proposition.

The whole subject of governmental interference is a very thorny one—very difficult to deal with by exact rules or principles, and rather requiring the application of common sense in each particular instance where such interference is proposed. When we consider the outrageous interference with personal liberty, in those matters wherein personal liberty is most required, that has entered into the legislation of most countries: when we perceive how difficult it is to get such legislation repealed, as may be seen from one notable instance respecting the laws of marriage in our own country: we are almost inclined to adopt the strict limitations

[1] „Der Staat ſoll nemlich auf keine Weiſe für das poſitive Wohl der Bürger ſorgen, daher auch nicht für ihr Leben und ihre Geſundheit—es müßten denn Handlungen andrer ihnen Gefahr drohen—aber wohl für ihre Sicherheit. Und nur, inſofern die Sicherheit ſelbſt leiden kann, indem Betrügerei die Unwiſſenheit benutzt, könnte eine ſolche Aufſicht innerhalb der Gränzen der Wirkſamkeit des Staats liegen."

APP. proposed by Wilhelm Von Humboldt. On the other hand, when we fully perceive what enormous benefits to the public may accrue from the restriction of liberty, as regards those 'actions of others' which are noxious to the welfare of the community, we are prone to call loudly, sometimes, perhaps, too loudly, for governmental interference.

Von Humboldt, as quoted above, has said that 'energy is the chief virtue of mankind.' These general statements about virtues or vices can seldom be absolutely admitted. But if one were obliged to make any statement at all about them, it might perhaps be more truly said, that indolence is the chief vice of mankind and moderation the principal virtue—at any rate the virtue which is most rarely practised. To avoid this vice and cultivate this virtue, are the two things mainly required in order to deal justly and wisely with this great matter of interference, on the part of the State, in behalf of the public welfare.

INDEX.

ABO

ABOLITION of offices, 183
— of sinecures, 128
Abuse of honours, 84
Act, local, 58
Act of Parliament, 147
— working of a good, 149
— inoperative, 154
Action of the British Government, 218
— of a State, 233
— of others, 235
— of American Senate, 44
Administration and legislation, 35, 165
Adulteration of drugs, 30
Advantages of local government, 51
Advice of lawyers, 177
— of others, a minister acting with, 201
Affection, State not going wrong from excess of, 24
Age, limitations as to, 69
— of transition, 125
Agents, value of good, 55
— choice of, 69
— trusting, 180
Ages of a nation, 217
Aids to government, 2, 14, 61, 96
Ambassadors, origin of, 189
Ambition, an evil, 153

BRI

Ambition, cause of misplaced, 155
American Senate, 44
Americans, a governable people, 8
Anglo-Saxon race very critical, 144
Anxiety of Ministers to make good appointments, 75
Apology of Plato, 10
Applause, absence of public, 80
Appointments, making good, 75
Argumentation, power of, 122
Aristophanes. The Peaceful Citizen, 25
Art, advancement of, 2, 22
Authority, central, 57, 59
— local, 57
Author's claims for being heard, 3
Average of thought, 202
'Avid of facts,' Talleyrand, 134

BACON, Lord, 101
Benevolence of certain employers, 159
Bent of one's mind to be guarded against, 203
British, easy to govern, 8
— moderate in rebellion, 9
— cautious, 9
— not envious, 16
— constant, 16

BRI

British, critical, 17
— tolerant, 17
— averse to extremes, 17
Boar, fable of the troublesome, 84
Boards, 102, 103, 183
Broom, economy about a, 181
Buckhounds, master of the, 77
Bureaucracy, fear of a, 28

CABINETS, sinecures in, 127
Captains of industry, 37
Care, practical, in choice of men, 74
Case submitted to a Minister, 199
Causa causans, a, 220
Caution, British, 9
Caveat emptor, 27, 30
Central authority, imperial nature of, 57
— what it really is, 59
— inspecting, not superseding, local authority, 57
Chairman, choice of a, 102
Chamber, a second, 38
— defects of a single, 40
— De Tocqueville on, 43
Character of advisers to be considered, 202
China, competitive examinations in, 62
Citizen and the man, 234
Coleridge's translation of Schiller, 229
Colonial affairs, dealing with, 22
Colonies, knowledge of, 144
Colonists, British the best of, 193
— in Parliament, 47
Commerce, 221
Commercial enterprise, outlet for, 221
Commune of Paris, 42
Communications, to the press, 172

DAN

Communications unnecessary, 168
Competitive examinations, 62
— adopted in China, 62
— advantage of, 63
— inefficiency of, 63
— motives for, 67
— example of an opposite system, 77
Compromises, 17
Conclusions of author mostly apply to Great Britain, 5
Condition of lower classes, 146
Conduct of majorities, 11
Conservatives, first opinion on Ambassadors, 189
Constitution, of a Department, 174
— of the Privy Council, 109
— George III. on British, 6
— M. Guizot on British, 18
Correspondence, publishing diplomatic, 195
Council, Privy, 109
Councils, various, 43
— use of, 96
— two kinds of, 97
— special nature, 98
— tendency of representative, 98
— advantages to be derived from, 99
— characteristics of, 100
— fatigue in, 101
— choice of chairman for, 102
— sections should interchange duties, 103
— special utility of, 105
Counsellors, *ex officio*, 104
— 'multitude of,' 97
Criticism, 37, 62, 123
— British, 17

DANGEROUS classes, their number, 217

DEB

Debating societies of some use, 139
Decadence of nations, 220
— of Rome, 220
— of Spain, 222
Defence of a Department, 49
Definition, of a State, true, 132
Democratic agency, 158
— movement, use to be made of, 214
Departments not to be sacrificed to Parliament, 165
— defence of, 49
— attachment to, 49
— origin of some, 114
— officers in a, 174
— extra officers for a, 170
— intellectual power of a, 173
Despondency, 217
Details, love of, 134
— mastery of, 133
De Tocqueville's opinion on a second Chamber, 43
Detrimental honours, 91
Development of opinions, 13
Diplomacy, 188
— a new thing, 188
— failure of, 194
— failure of, a cause of war, 193
— a preventative of war, 197
— the future of, 197
Diplomatic correspondence published, 195
Disobedience to be allowed for, 204
Distrust, false economy, 180
Division of labour, 21
Doctrinaire, 17, 125, 229
Double-first, the, 75
Drugs, adulteration of, 30

ECONOMY, political, 2
— false, 178

FOR

Economy, alse, a disaster, 178
— a plausible thing, 178
— broom, 181
— private, 181
— true, 182
Eckermann's conversations wit Goethe, reference to, 12
Education of statesmen never ends, 142
— special, of a statesman, 133
Electors and elected, 95
Energy, the first and only virtue of mankind, 235, 236
Examinations, non-competitive, 77
Ex-officio counsellors, 104
Experience not always in the form of reason, 4
— of a minister, 150
Experienced men, 76
Expression, power of, 135
— national power of, 136
— includes logic, 136
— an art to be cultured, 136
— includes method, 136
— want of, obvious to all, 137
Evils, political, created, 94

FABLE of the cuckoo and eagle, 85
— troublesome boar, 85
— king and counsellors, 86
— wandering tribe of Thibet, 87
Failure through patchwork, 208
False economy, disastrous, 178
— a plausible thing, 178
— a case of, 179
Fanatical thinkers, dangerous, 228
Fatigue in councils, 101
Fluellen, saying of, 59
Foresight needed, 125
— very rare, 125

FOR

Foresight, not to be confined to statesmen, 128
— benefits resulting from, 130
— in regard to panics, 131
Fraternal government, 34
Free-trade, 12
Friendship between officials, 50
Functions of government, 1

GAS WORKS in large cities, 19
Generosity, 177
George III.'s opinion of British constitution, 6
— and the Irish baron, 83
Girondins, the, 129
Glass hive, government like bees in a, 176
Goethe on minorities, 12
— a saying of, 40
'Gold lends mighty force,' 89
Good appointments, anxiety to make, 75
Government, its functions, 1
— aids to, 2, 14, 61, 96
— interference, 20, 26
— central, 57
— relations with the press, 172
— organizing skill required in, 121
— working of British, 176
— mob, 231
— paternal, 23
— perils from bad, 229
— fraternal, 34
— local, 51
Gravina, 132
Grandeur des Romains, 226
Grievances to be dealt with singly, 151
Guizot's, M., opinion of England, 18

INT

HALLAM on the Privy Council, 110
Health ought to be the care of government, 32
Hereditary peers, 45
History, high use of, 129
— study of, 199
— how statesmen should study, 135
Honours, conferred rightly, 83
— a case of abuse, 83
— not less wanted as civilization advances, 84
— bestowal of, from fear, favour, riches, age, 89
— detrimental, 90
— how not to be used, 91
— recently conferred on civil servants,
— Napoleon on, 84
House of Lords, 44
— defects of, 44
— proposed reforms for, 45
Human affairs, interest in, to be cultivated early, 141

IMPERIAL interests must outweigh popular clamour, 147
Improvement, in contrast with reform, 152
Improvements in London, 156
Improvers, scope for, 154, 160
Indirect results, importance of, 210
Indolence, allowance for, to be made, 204
Inferiors, choice of, 79
— dependence on, 78
Infirmity of noble minds, 160
Information for the press, 172, 175
Intellects, Machiavelli's classification of, 106
Intellectual power of Departments, 173

INT

Intellectual powers of the public press, 171
Interference, government, 20, 26
— just and necessary, 27
— danger from too little, 29
— cases unfit for, 31
— limits of, 35
— on behalf of workpeople, 32
— on behalf of purchaser, 31
Inquisition in Spain, 222
Interviews, personal, desirable, 74

JOBBERY, 67
— fear of, 73
Johnson, Dr., 37, 224
Justice, love of, 139

KING George III.'s opinion of British Constitution, 6; making an Irish baron, 83
— Louis XV., 130
— and his counsellors, fable of the, 85
Knowledge of class views, 147
— of facts, 134
Krilof's fable, 84

LABOUR, division of, 21
Landor, 228
Lawyers' advice, 177
Legislation and administration, 35, 165
Letters addressed to a minister, 163
Life peerages, 45
Limits of interference, 35
Local Act, 58
Local authority, not superseded by central authority, 57
Local government, 51

MIS

Local government forms administrators, 51
— occupies restless spirits, 52
— brings classes together, 52
— teaches difficulties, 52
— higher classes should take part in, 53
— advantages of, 54
— limits of, 54
Local knowledge, advantage of, 66
Lois, l'esprit des, 132
London, need of improvement in, 156
Lords, House of, 44
Louis XV., 130
Love of detail, 134
Lower classes, condition of, 146

MACHIAVELLI'S classification of intellects, 106
Majorities, 10
Majority, general obedience to, 15
Massing of population, 20
Mastery of details, 133
Meetings, public, 145
Minister absorbed in work, 126
— critics of, often impracticable, 126
— need for less work, 127
— education of, 133
— case submitted to a, 199
Minister's experience, 150
— knowledge mostly official, 143
— time, 161
— private letters, 163
— holidays, 167
Ministers in Parliament, 164
Minorities, Goethe's opinion on, 12
Mire of ignorance, 216
Misgovernment, peril from, 229

MIS

Misunderstanding, a cause of quarrel, 190
Mob-government, 225
— danger from, 225
— principles which lead to, 226
— preventative of, 231
Montesquieu, 132, 226
Moor, Schiller's, 81

NAPIER, quotation from, 205
Napoleon I. on honours, 84
Nation of slaves and slaveowners, 213
National prosperity, 212, 219
— age, 217
— decadence, 220
New world, 222

OCCASION, errors concerning, 39
Occasion, not opportunity, 41
Offices, abolition of, 183
Opinions of George III. on the Constitution, 6
— of De Tocqueville on the same, 43
— of Goethe on minorities, 12
— Guizot on England, 18
— Napoleon I. on honours, 84
— development of, 13
— Von Humboldt on paternal government, 233
Organizing minds, 71
— should be sought, 123
Organization, skill in, 115
— not a gift peculiar to any race, 116
— of a Department, 174
— want of, at entertainments, 118
— want of, at railways, 119
— its importance, 120
— not teachable, 120

POI

Organization wanted in government, 121
— powers of argumentation and, 122
Organizer, qualities of a, 116
Origin of some departments, 114

PANICS, 131
Paris, the commune, 42
Parliament impeding good government, 36
— questions in, 36, 168
— seats in, 93, 94
— colonists in, 47
— conduct of a Bill in, 169
Parliamentary influence, abuse of, 68
Party, political and press, 153
— names, 153
Patchwork, 208
Paternal government, 23, 233
— good policy, 24
— its limits, 24
— prevents revolution, 32
— to be welcomed, 33
— Von Humboldt on, 233
Peaceful citizen, the, 25
Pecuniary tests, 70
Peerages, life, 45
— hereditary, 45
— special, 45
People, voice of the, 14
— massing of, 20
— not guided by press, 143
Permanent officers, 48
Personal interviews, 74
Peruvians, social system of, 215
'Philip drunk,' 41
Pitt in Parliament, 169
— and Wolfe, 72
Plato's Apology, 10
Poisons, sale of, 30

POL

Political economy, 2
— misfortunes of Spain, 223
— officers, 48
— evils created, 94
Pope, quotation from, 6
Popular ideas, 146
Powers of organization and argumentation, 122
'Prave ords,' 59
Precedent, its value, 201
Press, powers of, 171
— alliance with a party, 171
— relations of, with government, 172
— literary power, very great, 174
Primary tests, 66
'Prince,' quotation from Machiavelli's, 107
Private Secretaries, 184
Privileges, 214
Privy Council, 109
— its constitution, 110
— Hallam on the, 110
— not concerned with any party, 111
— sub-departments of, 113
— powers of, 112
— high utility, 112
— suggestions for the improvement of, 113
Promotion, 79
Property, a creature of the State, 22
Prosperity, of a nation, 219
— moral rather than physical, 224
Proverbs, to be considered in pairs, 198
Public, meetings, 145
— working of British government, 176
— should reserve opinion, 175
— applause, absence of, 80

REF

Public speaking, 92
Publication of diplomatic correspondence, 195

QUACKS, 158
Qualifications for Peers, 46
Questions in Parliament, 36, 168
Quotations from Coleridge's 'Schiller,' 229
— De Tocqueville, 43
— Eckermann, 12
— *l'Esprit des Lois*, 132
— Goethe, 12, 40, 89
— *Grandeur des Romains*, 226
— Guizot, 18
— Hallam, 110
— Johnson, Dr., 37, 222
— Krilof, 84
— Landor, 228
— Machiavelli's 'Prince,' 107
— Mirabeau, 233
— Montesquieu, 132, 226
— Napier, 205
— Pope, 6
— Ralston, W., 84
— Schiller, 81, 229
— Shakespeare, 59
— Talleyrand, 134
— Taylor, Sir H., 79
— Von Humboldt, 233

RACE, organization not a peculiar gift of any, 116
Railways, want of organization at, 119
References and quotations to be verified, 200
Reformer, efforts of a young, 26
Reforms proposed for the House of Lords, 45, 46

REP

Representative council, tendency of, 98
Representatives in foreign lands, value of, 192
Revolution necessary at times, 16, 213
— principles of, rife, 227
Rewards, for services, 183
— for private secretaries, 184
— hope of, should always be held open, 185
— evils of narrow system of, 92
Ridicule, a safeguard, 29
Right placing of men, 71
Rome, 220
— how its empire might have been prolonged, 222
— its fate, 227
Routine, mill of, 122
— like miller and his men, 128
Rules and principles, 206
— not to be made heedlessly, 207

SANITARY matters, 55
— powers, 59
Scheele's green, 32
Schiller's Moor, 81
— on war, 229
Scott, Sir Walter, his justice to opposite factions, 9
Seal, putting a, to fame, 93
Seats in Parliament, 93
— excessive demand for, 94
Second Chamber, 38, 40, 43
Secretaries, private, 184
Senate, American, action of, 44
Service, best, how to be obtained, 186
Shadow, jumping off one's own, 40
Sinecures, usefulness of, 127
— abolition of, 128

TES

Skill in organization, 120, 121
Slaves and slave-owning States, 213
Slowness, a fatal defect, 76
Social system of Peruvians, 215
Socialists, aim of, 32
Societies for debating, of some use, 139
Socrates' speech, 10
Spain and New World, 222
— political misfortunes of, 223
Speaking, the art of, 138
— in public, chiefly rewarded, 92
Spirits, restless, work for, 52
Stagnation, fatal to prosperity, 221
State, true definition of the, 132
Statesman, special education, 133
— 'avid of facts,' 134
— should study history, 135
— expression requisite for, 136
— much isolated, 142
Stateman's knowledge, mostly official, 143
Study of history, 199
— how statesmen stand, 135
Sub-departments of Privy Council, 113
Subjects for government interference, 20
Sun's rays, 211
Supervision, ridiculous, 181

Tabula Rasa, 155
Talleyrand, 134
Taxation, knowledge required for, 147
Taylor, Sir H., reference to his 'Statesman,' 79, 133, 135
Telegram from Paris, 42
Tenure of property, 22
Tests, primary, 66
— pecuniary, 70

THI

Thinking, 204
Time, error respecting it, 39
— of ministers, 161
— more, wanted for office work, 165
— needed to master facts, 166
Timidity, aided by good chairman, 102
— in a council, 97
Transition, age of, 125
Travel, English liking for, 144
Travellers, vague views from, 191
Tribe, the wandering, fable of, 87
Trust, in agents, 180
— necessary to vigorous action, 38

UNDER-SECRETARIES, 48, 174

VALUE of good agents, 53

YEA

Value, Napoleon's, of Ney, 61
— of precedent, 201
— of representatives abroad, 192
Verification, 200
Voice of the people, 14
Von Humboldt, 233

WAR prevented by diplomacy, 197
— caused by failure of diplomacy, 193
— preparations for, 131
Waterworks, 20
Wellington, Duke of, 204
Whist proposed as a test, 64
Wolfe, Pitt's choice of, 72

YEARS of discretion, 23

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